Donation Acceptance and Acknowledgment Policy

Policy Number: FIN-002
Approved By: Board of Directors
Effective Date: 4/20/2026

Executive Summary

This policy establishes Branches Christian Cooperative's standards for the ethical, transparent, and accountable handling of charitable contributions. It defines clear roles and procedures for receiving, recording, and acknowledging donations in compliance with IRS requirements for a 501(c)(3) organization. The policy reflects nonprofit best practices and Branches' commitment to biblical integrity, financial accountability, and faithful stewardship of donor generosity.

- Defines who may receive, record, and acknowledge monetary and non-cash (in-kind) donations
- Prohibits the acceptance of cash to reduce risk and improve financial accountability
- Establishes required procedures for recording and receipting donations in compliance with IRS regulations
- Distinguishes charitable donations from fees or required payments that provide direct benefits
- Prohibits valuing in-kind donations and assigns fair market value responsibility to the donor
- Outlines donor acknowledgment requirements and timelines for both cash and non-cash gifts
- Addresses IRS reporting thresholds and responsibilities for high-value in-kind contributions
- Assigns clear roles and responsibilities for donation handling and compliance (Board Members, Treasurer, Secretary, President)
- Provides standardized donation intake and recordkeeping templates in the appendices (Appendix A: Monetary Donation Intake Form; Appendix B: In-Kind Donation Intake Form).

Donation Acceptance and Acknowledgement Polic

1. **Purpose**

This policy provides clear procedures for all board members, staff, and authorized volunteers of Branches Christian Cooperative ("Branches") for receiving, processing, and acknowledging charitable contributions. The purpose is to ensure all donations are properly recorded, donors are thanked and receipted in a timely and compliant manner, and Branches meets all legal requirements set forth by the IRS for a 501(c)(3) organization.

This policy is established to ensure the integrity of our financial operations and to maintain the trust of our valued donors. All board members and volunteers involved in handling donations are required to read, understand, and adhere to this policy.

2. **Key Principles**
   - **Do Not Value In-Kind Donations:** Branches and its representatives must not place a monetary value on any non-cash (in-kind) donation (e.g., furniture, books, equipment) on any receipt or acknowledgment letter. The responsibility for determining Fair Market Value (FMV) lies solely with the donor.
   - **Unrestricted Gifts Only:** Branches accepts only unrestricted donations. Branches does not accept gifts with donor-imposed restrictions, designations, conditions, or other limitations on use. If a donor attempts to restrict a gift, refer the matter to the Treasurer or President before accepting.
   - **Prompt Acknowledgment:** All donations will be acknowledged in writing within 14 days of receipt.
   - **Distinguish Donations from Fees:** This policy applies only to voluntary charitable contributions. It does not apply to required payments such as registration fees, tuition, supply fees, or any other payment where the family receives a direct benefit (i.e., the right to participate).

3. **Procedures for Receiving Donations**

   3.1. **Monetary Donations (Check, Online)**

   - **Recording (Treasurer's Responsibility):**
     - Immediately upon receipt, the Treasurer will record the donation in Branches's financial ledger.
     - The record must include:
       - Donor's full name and contact information (address/email).
       - Date the donation was received.
       - Amount of the donation.
       - Form of payment (cash, check #, online transaction ID).

    - Cash donations are not accepted. Acceptable monetary donation meth are check or online transaction.
- **Acknowledgment (Secretary's Responsibility):**
    - The Secretary will generate and send a written acknowledgment letter or email to the donor.
    - The letter must include:
        - Branches's name.
        - The amount of the cash contribution.
        - The date of the contribution.
        - A statement that no goods or services were provided by the organization in exchange for the contribution. (e.g., *"No goods or services were provided in whole or in part for this contribution."*)

3.2. Non-Cash (In-Kind) Donations (Goods, Furniture, Supplies, etc.)

- **Receiving the Item (Responsibility of any Board Member/Volunteer):**
    - Accept the item graciously on behalf of Branches.
    - Create a simple internal record of the donation. A "Donation Intake Form" can be used for this.
    - Verbally thank the donor, but do not discuss or estimate the value of the item. If the donor asks, use the following script: *"Thank you so much for this gift. For tax purposes, the IRS requires that the donor determines the item's value. We will send you a formal acknowledgment letter describing the item for your records."*
- **Internal Reporting:**
    - The person who received the item must immediately provide the intake form or donation details (donor info, item description, date) to the Secretary and Treasurer.
- **Acknowledgment (Secretary's Responsibility):**
    - The Secretary will generate and send a written acknowledgment letter or email.
    - The letter must include:
        - Branches's name.
        - A detailed description of the item(s). (e.g., "one (1) maple bookshelf with 5 shelves in good condition," not "furniture").
        - The date of the contribution.

        - The required IRS statement: *"No goods or services were provide in whole or in part for this contribution."*
    - The letter must NOT state a value.

4. Special Circumstances & IRS Thresholds

- **Donations Claimed by Donor Over $5,000:** If a donor informs you they intend to claim a value over $5,000 for an item, they are required by the IRS to get a formal appraisal. They will ask an officer of Branches (typically the President or Treasurer) to sign IRS Form 8283, Section B, Part IV (Donee Acknowledgment).
    - **Action:** You may sign this form. Signing only confirms that Branches received the property described. It does NOT mean Branches agrees with the appraised value. Do not sign if you have reason to believe the item is not what is described on the form.
- **Sale of Donated Property:** If Branches sells or disposes of any item that required a signed Form 8283 within three (3) years of the donation date, the Treasurer must file IRS Form 8282 (Donee Information Return) within 125 days of the sale and provide a copy to the original donor.

5. Summary of Responsibilities

Role	Key Responsibilities
All Board/Volunteers	Politely receive donations. Accurately describe in-kind gifts on intake forms. NEVER state or estimate a value to a donor.
Treasurer	Records and deposits all monetary donations. Manages financial ledgers. Files Form 8282 if required.
Secretary	Generates and sends all official acknowledgment letters in a timely manner. Keeps copies of acknowledgments for Branches records.
President/Treasurer	Acts as the authorized officer to sign IRS Form 8283 when presented by a donor for high-value gifts.

Appendix A: Monetary Donation Intake Form (Internal Use)

Instructions: Complete this form for every **monetary** donation (check or online). Provide the completed form to the Treasurer (for recording) and Secretary (for acknowledgment) as soon as practical after receipt.

- **Restricted gifts not accepted:** Branches accepts only **unrestricted** gifts. If a donor attempts to impose restrictions/designations/conditions, do not accept the donation; refer to the Treasurer or President.
- **No cash accepted:** Monetary donations must be by check or online transaction.

Section 1: Intake Tracking

Intake / Receipt ID: ____
Date Received: ____ / ____ / ________ **Time (optional):** ________________
Received By (name): ____
Amount: $__________________
Method: ☐ Check ☐ Online
Check # (if applicable): __________________
Online Transaction ID (if applicable): __________________
Cash received? ☐ No (required) ☐ Attempted (declined / referred)

Section 2: Donation Received Via

Received via: ☐ In person ☐ Mail ☐ Event ☐ Drop-off ☐ Other: __________
Location / Event name (optional): ____________________________________

Section 3: Donor Information

Donor Name (individual or business):
____
Phone: __________________ **Email:** ___________________________
Mailing Address (for acknowledgment):
____
____

Donor Attestation (required): Donor confirms this gift is **unrestricted** and is provided with no conditions on how Branches must use the gift.
Donor Signature (if in person): _____________________________
Date: ____ / ____ / ________

Section 4: Declined Donation

Donation declined? ☐ No ☐ Yes
Reason (check all that apply): ☐ Restricted/Designated gift attempted
☐ Cash attempted ☐ Not an eligible item ☐ Other: ____________________
Date declined: ____ / ____ / ________ **Declined by:** _____________________
Was the item/check returned? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Date returned (if applicable): ____ / ____ / ________
Notes: ____

Section 5: Treasurer Processing (Treasurer Only)

Date Recorded in Ledger: ____ / ____ / ________
Recorded By: __________________________
Deposit Date: ____ / ____ / ________
Deposit/Batch ID (optional): _____________________

Section 6: Acknowledgment (Secretary Only — within 14 days)

Date Acknowledgment Sent: ____ / ____ / ________
Sent By: _____________________
Method: ☐ Email ☐ Mail
Copy Filed (location/filename): _____________________
Goods/Services Provided? ☐ No (typical) ☐ Yes (describe):
____

If goods/services were provided, ensure the acknowledgment contains the required IRS disclosure language.

Appendix B: In-Kind Donation Intake Form (Internal Use)

Instructions: Complete this form for every **non-cash (in-kind)** donation. Provide the completed form to the Treasurer (for tracking/compliance) and Secretary (for acknowledgment) as soon as practical after receipt.

- **Restricted gifts not accepted:** Branches accepts only **unrestricted** gifts. If a donor attempts to impose restrictions/designations/conditions, do not accept the donation; refer to the Treasurer or President.
- **No valuation of in-kind gifts:** Do not state or estimate fair market value. Describe the item(s) in detail only.

Section 1: Intake Tracking

Intake / Receipt ID: ____

Date Received: ____ / ____ / ________ **Time (optional):** _________________

Received By (name): ____

Role: ☐ Board Member ☐ Volunteer ☐ Staff

Reminder: Provide a **detailed description** only. Do **not** state or estimate value.

Item Description (include quantity, make/model, condition, identifying details):

____

____

____

Condition: ☐ New ☐ Like New ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

Photos Taken (optional): ☐ Yes ☐ No **Photos sent with form:** ☐ Yes ☐ No

Item Storage/Location (internal): ___________________

Received By / Custodian: ___________________

High-Value Compliance Flag (internal): Did the donor indicate they intend to claim a value over $5,000 for this item?

☐ No / Unknown ☐ Yes (refer to Treasurer/President for Form 8283 process)

Section 2: Donation Received Via (Any authorized receiver)

Received via: ☐ In person ☐ Mail ☐ Event ☐ Drop-off ☐ Other: ___________

Location / Event name (optional): ______________________________________

Section 3: Donor Information (Any authorized receiver)

Donor Name (individual or business):

____

Phone: ___________________ **Email:** ____________________________

Mailing Address (for acknowledgment):

____

____

Donor Attestation (required): Donor confirms this gift is **unrestricted** and is provid with no conditions on how Branches must use the gift.

Donor Signature (if in person): ______________________________

Date: ____ / ____ / ________

Section 4: Declined Donation (Any authorized receiver)

Donation declined? ☐ No ☐ Yes

Reason (check all that apply): ☐ Restricted/Designated gift attempted

☐ Not an eligible item ☐ Other: __________________

Date declined: ____ / ____ / ________ **Declined by:** ___________________

Notes: ____

Section 5: In-Kind Disposition Tracking (Treasurer only)

Disposition status: ☐ Still held/used by Branches ☐ Disposed/Sold/Transferred

Date disposed/transferred (if applicable): ____ / ____ / ________

Method: ☐ Sold ☐ Donated to another organization ☐ Discarded ☐ Other: ___________________

Proceeds (if sold): $___________________

Date proceeds deposited (optional): ____ / ____ / ________

Form 8283 signed for this gift? ☐ No / Unknown ☐ Yes

If yes, is Form 8282 required? ☐ No ☐ Yes

Date Form 8282 filed (if required): ____ / ____ / ________

Notes: ____

Section 6: Acknowledgment (Secretary — within 14 days)

Date Acknowledgment Sent: ____ / ____ / ________

Sent By: ___________________

Method: ☐ Email ☐ Mail

Copy Filed (location/filename): ___________________

Goods/Services Provided? ☐ No (typical) ☐ Yes (describe): ____

If goods/services were provided, ensure the acknowledgment contains the required IRS disclosure language.