



Tax Preparation Checklist

Before you begin to prepare your income tax return, go through the following checklist. Highlight the areas that apply to you, and make sure you have that information available. Better yet, attach the list to a folder of your tax documents, and check items off as you add them to the folder.

Most people will need:

Personal information

This information tells the IRS exactly who's filing, who is covered in your tax return, and where to deposit your tax refund.

- Social Security numbers and dates of birth for you, your spouse, your dependents
- Copies of last year's tax return for you and your spouse (helpful, but not required)
- Bank account number and routing number, if depositing your refund directly into your account

Information about your income

- W-2 forms for you and your spouse
- 1099-C forms for cancellation of debt
- 1099-G forms for unemployment income, or state or local tax refunds
- 1099-MISC forms for you and your spouse (for any independent contractor work)
- 1099-R, Form 8606 for payments/distributions from IRAs or retirement plans
- 1099-S forms for income from sale of a property
- 1099-INT, -DIV, -B, or K-1s for investment or interest income
- SSA-1099 for Social Security benefits received
- Alimony received
- Business or farming income - profit/loss statement, capital equipment information
- Rental property income and expenses: profit/loss statement, suspended loss information
- Prior year installment sale information - Forms 6252, principal and interest collected during the year, SSN and address for payer
- Miscellaneous income: jury duty, gambling winnings, Medical Savings Account, scholarships, etc.

Adjustments to your income

The following items can help reduce the amount of your income that is taxed, which can increase your tax refund, or lower the amount you owe.

- Form 1098-E for student loan interest paid (or loan statements for student loans)
- Form 1098-T for tuition paid (or receipts/canceled checks for tuition paid for post-high school)
- Overtime Amount Earned during the year
- Records of IRA contributions made during the year
- Receipts for any qualifying energy-efficient home improvements (solar, windows, etc.)
- New Car Interest Amount
- Self-employed health insurance payment records
- 1099-K for Online sales, etc.
- Alimony paid
- Keogh, SEP, SIMPLE, and other self-employed pension plans

It is very difficult to itemize anymore. Married couples need about 35K in these expenses to get any tax savings. So Mortgage Interest, Real Estate Taxes, Medical, and Charitable may not help you at all.

If you itemize your deductions:

Deductions and credits

The government offers a number of deductions and credits to help lower the tax burden on individuals, which means more money in your pocket. You'll need the following documentation to make sure you get all the deductions and credits you deserve:

- Child care costs: provider's name, address, tax ID, and amount paid.
- Education costs: Form 1098-T, education expenses. This is a big credit!
- Adoption costs: SSN of child; records of legal, medical and transportation costs
- Forms 1098: Mortgage interest, private mortgage insurance (PMI), and points you paid
- Real Estate Taxes, State Taxes, Sales Taxes on large purchase such as a car.
- Charitable donations: cash amounts, official charity receipts, canceled checks; value of donated property; miles driven and out-of-pocket expenses. If you plan on itemizing.
- Medical and dental expense records. You may only get what is over 7.5% of AGI, and you got to itemize.
- Casualty and theft losses: amount of damage, insurance reimbursements

Deductions and credits (continued)

- Document that has your dependent child's name and your address on it. Something that provides proof your child lives with you. We need this in our file or the IRS can fine us \$1800 each tax year.
- Records of home business expenses, home size/office size, home expenses
- Rental property income/expenses: profit/loss statement, rental property suspended loss information

Important items for 2025.

- Overtime (only additional amount of OT), and Tip Income is tax-exempt
- OBAMACARE FORM 1095A. IMPORTANT. WE CAN'T FILE WITHOUT THAT INFO.
- New Car Interest is tax deductible, and the cap on taxes paid have been increased
- We highly recommend setting up your personal account with IRS.gov. You can get instant info if needed.

Other information

- Estimated tax payments made during the year (self-employed)
- Prior-year refund applied to current year and/or any amount paid with an extension to file
- Foreign bank account information: Please go online each year to report your FBAR at Fincen.gov

Also Other Important information needed:

OBAMACARE- Did we mention Obamacare? We need that 1095-A statement. Very important. The IRS WILL NOT process your taxes without that information. Healthcare.org.

We highly recommend everyone go to IRS.gov and set up their account with the IRS. From there you can get up-to-date information, tax records, tax transcripts, make payments, etc. Much easier streamlined process to handle your taxes with the IRS.