



GET **READY** TO FILE

Take Steps Now
to **Get a Jump** on Next Year's Taxes



Get ready to file your federal income tax return with these preparation tips



START WITH **IRS.GOV** WHEN YOU NEED HELP

Start with [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) for help that includes tools, filing options and other services and resources. Taxpayers increasingly use [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) as their first resource for tax matters. Information in languages other than English is available under the “Language” tab on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov). Publication 5136, the [IRS Services Guide](#) shows you where to find more information on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov). The [Let Us Help You](#) page on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) features links to information and resources on a wide range of topics.

To view your own personal federal tax information, visit [IRS.gov/account](https://www.irs.gov/account) and create an account or log in to securely view your balance and payment history. You can also see key information from your most current tax return as originally filed, select an electronic payment option, and go directly to Get Transcript to access your tax records, without having to log in again.

Tax information is available on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) in up to six languages and [accessible](#) forms and publications are available for people with disabilities. The IRS offers several ways for you to stay updated on important tax information that may help you get ready to file. In addition to [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov), you can download the [IRS2Go app](#), watch [IRS YouTube](#) videos, and follow the IRS on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).



ADJUST YOUR WITHHOLDING

Did you receive a smaller refund than expected or owe an unanticipated tax bill? Do a [paycheck checkup](#) using the [IRS Tax Withholding Estimator](#) to help decide if you need to adjust your withholding or make estimated or additional tax payments. Submit a new [Form W-4, Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate](#) to your employer if you need to make an adjustment. You can also make estimated or additional tax payments if the withholding from your salary, pension or other income doesn't cover the income tax that you'll owe for the year. [Form 1040-ES, Estimated Tax for Individuals](#), has a worksheet to help you figure your estimated payments.

To make federal tax payments, go to [IRS.gov/payments](https://www.irs.gov/payments) or make secure electronic with your mobile device using the [IRS2Go](#) app.



Visit [IRS.gov/get ready](https://www.irs.gov/get-ready)
for filing resources



GET READY TO FILE

Filing electronically is the most accurate way to prepare and file your tax return. Errors delay refunds and the easiest way to avoid them is to [file electronically](#). Tax preparation software guides you through the process and does all the math.

Seventy percent of all taxpayers can use free brand-name tax software to prepare and file their federal income tax return electronically using [IRS Free File](#). All taxpayers, regardless of income level, can also use Free File Fillable Forms. Senior citizens, members of the military, and many other taxpayers—depending on your income—may also qualify for free tax return preparation and electronic filing through the [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program](#) or [Tax Counseling for the Elderly](#) programs.

Taxpayers age 65 or older may use the new Form 1040-SR, U.S. Tax Return for Seniors. All others will file Form 1040.

GET READY FOR YOUR REFUND

Different factors can affect your refund. Be careful not to count on getting a refund by a certain date, especially when making major purchases or paying other financial obligations. See [IRS.gov/Refunds](https://www.irs.gov/Refunds) for more information.

The IRS issues most refunds in less than 21 days. However, it's possible your tax return may require additional review and take longer. And, if you claim the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#) or [Additional Child Tax Credit](#), by law, the IRS cannot issue your refund before mid-February. This timeframe applies to the entire refund, not just the portion associated with these credits.

Combining [direct deposit](#) with electronic filing is the fastest way for you to get your refund. With direct deposit, a refund goes directly into your bank account. There's no reason to worry about a lost, stolen or undeliverable refund check.



REVIEW YOUR ELIGIBILITY FOR CREDITS AND DEDUCTIONS

Tax credits and deductions can mean more money in your pocket and thinking about your eligibility now can help make filing easier next year. Go to [IRS.gov/ita](https://www.irs.gov/ita) to get answers to your tax questions about [credits](#) and [deductions](#).

Taxable income is what's left over after you subtract any eligible [deductions](#) from your income. This includes the standard deduction. While most taxpayers take the [standard deduction](#), some may choose to itemize because it could lower their taxable income even more.

You can subtract [tax credits](#) from the total amount of tax owed. Parents may qualify for credits like the [Child Tax Credit](#) and [Child and Dependent Care Credit](#). Dependents who can't be claimed for the Child Tax Credit may still qualify you for the [Credit for Other Dependents](#). Families with students may qualify for the [American Opportunity Credit](#) or [Lifetime Learning Credit](#). Low to moderate income taxpayers may qualify for the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#). To claim a credit, you should keep records that show your eligibility for it.



RENEW EXPIRING ITINs

If you use an ITIN (Individual Tax Identification Number) to file, make sure it hasn't expired. Go to [IRS.gov/ITIN](https://www.irs.gov/ITIN) for more information.



PROTECT YOUR DATA

The IRS, the states and the tax industry are committed to protecting you from identity theft. Take [these steps](#) to protect yourself from identity thieves.

