



Tips to help make tax season go smoothly.

[Taxpayers can avoid mistakes and receive a timely refund by preparing to file their tax return ahead of time. Here are a few things taxpayers can do to get ready:](#)

- **Gather records:** Good recordkeeping makes preparing a tax return easier. Organized tax records can help taxpayers find overlooked deductions and credits.
- **Start with IRS.gov:** IRS.gov is available 24/7, and it's the fastest way to get help. Millions of people use IRS.gov to file and pay taxes and get information about their accounts or answers to tax questions. The IRS Services Guide outlines the many ways taxpayers can get help from the IRS.
- **Use online tools:** IRS.gov has many useful online tools. One of them - the Interactive Tax Assistant – provides answers to many tax questions specific to an individual's circumstances. It gives the same answers that an IRS representative would give over the phone.
- **Choose a reputable preparer:** Tax preparers have different levels of skills, education and expertise. The IRS Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers can help taxpayers find tax preparers in their area who hold professional credentials recognized by the IRS or who participate in the IRS filing season program.
- **File electronically:** The IRS encourages people to file their tax returns electronically and choose direct deposit for refunds. Filing electronically reduces tax return errors as the tax software does the calculations, flags common errors and prompts taxpayers for missing information.
- **Choose direct deposit:** Choosing direct deposit is a fast, reliable and secure way to receive a refund. Taxpayers can have their refund deposited into one, two or even three accounts. According to Treasury's Bureau of the Fiscal Service, paper refund checks are 16 times more likely to have an issue, like the check being lost, misdirected, stolen or uncashed.
- **Report all income:** Take time to know what is taxable and nontaxable income. Taxpayers must report their income from all sources, including the gig economy, Forms 1099 and Forms W-2, Wage and Tax Statements.
- **Report unemployment benefits:** Taxpayers who received unemployment benefits must report the amount received as taxable income on their tax return.
- **Accurate returns:** Taxpayers should take extra time to review their tax return so they can file a complete and accurate return and avoid refund delays. Check all names and Social Security numbers as well as, account and routing numbers needed to get a direct deposit.
- **Review Publication 17, Your Federal Income Tax:** This guide covers the general rules for filing a federal income tax return. Available in English and Spanish on IRS.gov, and translations in Russian, Vietnamese, Korean and Chinese – simplified and traditional – will be available soon. The new format makes it easier to navigate and faster to download.