

Tax Preparation Checklist

The following Tax Preparation Checklist is designed to help you gather the tax information needed to prepare your 2016 personal income tax return. Highlight the areas that apply to you, and make sure to include that information for the preparation of your tax return.

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 and dependents
- Copies of last year's tax return for you and your spouse
- Bank account number and routing number, if depositing your refund or paying your tax bill through electronic transfer
- Legal papers for adoption, divorce, or separation involving custody of your dependent children
- All Forms 1095-A for the advance payment of the Premium Tax Credit for lower cost health care coverage under healthcare.gov
- All Forms 1095-B and/or C for employer-sponsored qualifying health care coverage

Information about your income

- W-2 forms for you and your spouse
- All Forms 1099 for interest, dividends, retirement, miscellaneous income, Social Security, state or local refunds, gambling winnings, etc.
- Brokerage statements showing investment transactions for stocks, bonds, etc.
- Schedule K-1 from partnerships, S corporations, estates and trusts
- Alimony received
- Business or farming income – schedule of income and expenses, capital equipment purchases and disposals
- Rental property income and expenses
- 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
- For teachers: Canceled checks or receipts for expenses paid for classroom supplies, etc.
- Records of IRA contributions made during the year

- Receipts for any qualifying energy-efficient home improvements (solar, windows, etc.)
- Records of Medical Savings Account (MSA) contributions
- Self-employed health insurance payment records
- Records of moving expenses
- Alimony paid
- Keogh, SEP, SIMPLE, and other self-employed pension plans

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
- Forms 1098: Mortgage interest, private mortgage insurance (PMI), and points you paid
- Investment interest expenses
- Charitable donations: cash amounts, official charity receipts, canceled checks; value of donated property, miles driven and out-of-pocket expenses
- Medical and dental expense records
- Casualty and theft losses: amount of damage, insurance reimbursements
- Amounts of other miscellaneous tax deductions: tax prep fees, legal expenses, union dues; unreimbursed employee expenses (uniforms, supplies, seminars, continuing education, publications, travel, etc.)
- Home office expenses: office square footage and total home square footage, utilities, repairs and other home expenses

Taxes you've paid

- State and local income taxes paid
- Real estate taxes paid
- Personal property taxes
- Sales tax on large purchases, such as vehicles, boats, etc.

Other information

- Copies of closing statements regarding the sale or purchase of real property
- Any tax notices sent to you by the IRS or other taxing authority
- Federal and State estimated tax payments made during the year
- Prior-year refund applied to current year
- Any amount paid with an extension to file
- Foreign bank account information: location, name of bank, account number, peak value of account during the year