

Get organized with our tax preparation checklist

Before you begin working on your personal income tax return, it's a good idea to collect and organize your tax documents and related records. The tax preparation checklist below (and the [PDF version](#)) will help you keep track of the information you'll need.

The handy checklist will cover the documents and other information needed by most people to file their federal income tax return. Just pick the categories that apply to you, and then start pulling together the necessary information. When you're ready to prepare your tax return using [Star Fya Tax Solutions](#) software, you'll be surprised at how much time you'll save by organizing your information beforehand.

We recommend printing the [PDF version of the checklist](#) and then placing it in a file folder or attaching it to the outside of the folder. As you receive or locate tax documents, place them in the folder and check them off the list. You can also scratch off anything on the list that doesn't apply to your tax situation. If there's information or amounts that aren't already available on other documents, such as your bank routing and account numbers for direct deposit, then you can jot them down on the printed checklist.

Star Fya Tax Solutions Tip:

If you use a program or app to keep track of your finances, print or download a report of your transactions for the tax year. This will help you clearly see where your money goes each year. As you review the report, highlight information you will need to prepare your tax return.

[NOTE: Our checklist is designed for filing a federal personal income tax return. However, if you're a business owner looking for help with your taxes, a Star Fya Tax Solutions representative can help you get your documents in order before filing your business tax return.]

Personal information

You'll need some personal information about you and your family members.

- Social Security numbers for you, your spouse, and any dependents (Individual Tax Identification Number or Adoption Taxpayer Identification Number for anyone not eligible for a Social Security number)

- dates of birth for you, your spouse, and any dependents
- income of any dependents

Income for the tax year

Gather the tax forms, records, and other information identified below – along with any other related documents – if you have any of the common types of income listed (you may also have additional forms of taxable income).

Wages, tips, and other compensation from employment

- W-2 forms
- tips received but not reported on W-2 forms
- household employee wages not reported on W-2 form (such as from work as a nanny, babysitter, maid, cook, private nurse)

Retirement income

- 1099-R forms for distributions from retirement plans (like IRAs), pensions, and annuities
- SSA-1099 forms for Social Security benefits
- RRB-1099 forms for Railroad Retirement Board benefits

Self-employment income (Schedule C)

- 1099-NEC forms for non-employee compensation
- 1099-K forms if you receive business payments through a third-party payment processor or online marketplace, such as PayPal or eBay
- sales records
- profit and loss statements
- expense receipts and records, including for the:
 - business use of your home (such as home size, office size, home expenses, and office expenses)
 - Business use of motor vehicles (such as mileage or actual costs, parking fees, tolls, registration fees)
 - cost of goods sold (such as inventory counts, materials, supplies, labor costs)
- other records or information about self-employment income

Investment income

- 1099-B forms for proceeds from the sale of stock, bonds, or other securities
- 1099-DIV forms for dividends and other distributions from investments
- 1099-INT forms for interest income
- cost and other basis information for property sold
- digital asset transaction records, such as for buying or selling cryptocurrency

Rental income

- 1099-MISC forms showing rent payments received
- rents received but not reported on 1099-MISC forms
- profit and loss statements
- number of days property is rented
- receipts and other records for expenses, such as mortgage interest, property taxes, insurance, repair and maintenance costs
- depreciation schedules, if you're claiming depreciation on your rental property

Real estate sales income

- 1099-S forms for proceeds from sale of real estate
- escrow closing statements
- cost and other basis information for property sold

Farm income (Schedule F)

- 1099-G forms for agricultural subsidies or other government payments
- 1099-PATR forms for distributions from cooperatives
- 1099-MISC forms for pasture rental income, crop insurance proceeds, or other miscellaneous income
- other records or information about farm income, including for sales of livestock, grain, produce, and other products
- expense receipts and records

Other common forms of income

- alimony received for divorce settlements finalized before 2019 (records of alimony payments and date of settlement agreement)
- business income from S corporations, partnerships, and LLCs (Schedule K-1 forms)
- gambling winnings (W-2G forms)

- prizes or awards (records showing amount of cash or value of property received)
- refund of state or local income tax (1099-G forms)
- scholarships used for incidental expenses or received as payment for services (records showing how scholarship funds were used and why given)
- stock options (dates, stock value, and other information about granting and exercising options and sale of stock)
- unemployment compensation (1099-G forms)

Tax deductions and credits

Collect the tax forms, records, and other information identified below – along with any other related documents – if you qualify for any of the common personal income tax deductions or credits listed (additional tax breaks may also be available).

Deductions

Alimony deduction (only if divorce settlement was finalized before 2019)

- amount of alimony paid
- ex-spouse's Social Security number

Charitable gifts deduction

- receipts, bank or credit card statement, canceled checks, or other records showing amount, date, and recipient of cash donations
- for gifts of \$250 or more, a written acknowledgment from the charitable organization showing amount of money or description of property donated, and stating whether or not the organization gave you any goods or services in return
- [1098-C forms](#) for contributions of motor vehicles, boats, and airplanes
- appraisals for deductions over \$5,000 for donations of property (over \$500 for donations of clothing and household items)
- mileage for use of your motor vehicle to do volunteer work for charitable organizations

Medical and dental expense deduction

- receipts and other records for unreimbursed payments for doctor or dentist visits, tests, treatments, and other services
- insurance premiums paid for medical and dental coverage (unless paid through payroll deductions with pre-tax money), including premiums for Medicare and long-term care insurance

- mileage for use of your motor vehicle for medical reasons
- lodging expenses (but not meals) while away from home to receive medical care
- receipts for payment of other deductible medical expenses

Mortgage interest and points deduction

- 1098 forms
- home mortgage interest or points not reported on 1098 forms, including recipient's name, address, and taxpayer identification number

State and local taxes (SALT) deduction

- estimated state and local income tax payments
- sales tax payment records, such as sales receipts (will be used if you end up deducting sales taxes instead of state and local income taxes, and you're not using the IRS's optional sales tax tables to calculate your sales tax deduction)
- real estate tax payment records, including escrow closing statements from mortgage refinancing or home purchase
- personal property tax payment records, including for motor vehicle license fees based on the value of your vehicle

Student loan interest deduction

- 1098-E forms
- loan statements if 1098-E form not received
- loan origination fee or capitalized interest records (for loans made before September 1, 2004)

Other common tax deductions

- Archer medical spending account (MSA) deduction (5498-SA forms)
- disaster/casualty and theft loss deduction (documents and records showing amount of damage, basis and value of damaged or stolen property, insurance reimbursements)
- gambling losses, if you have gambling winnings (receipts, raffle tickets, gambling logs, and other gambling records)
- health savings account (HSA) deduction (5498-SA forms)
- Investment interest expense deduction (documents and records for loans used to buy property held for investment)

- moving expense deduction for military personnel (receipts and records showing costs of transporting and storing household items and personal effects, traveling to new location, and other moving expenses)
- Self-employed health insurance deduction (premium payment records, Form 1095-A if you bought insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace)

Tax credits

Adoption credit

- receipts for qualified adoption expenses, including for legal, medical, and transportation costs
- employer reimbursements of adoption expenses (if any)
- adopted child's personal information, including name, year of birth, disability/special needs status, citizenship, and taxpayer identification number

Child and dependent care credit

- amount paid for care of qualifying person
- care provider's name, address, and taxpayer identification number

Clean vehicle credit (for purchase of electric vehicle, plug-in hybrid electric vehicle, or fuel cell vehicle)

- time-of-sale report from dealer (also called a seller report), which includes information about the dealer, vehicle purchased, sale price, transfer of credit to dealer (if applicable), maximum credit, and more
- MSRP (manufacturer's suggested retail price), if you buy a new vehicle (MSRP can be found on the vehicle information label attached to each vehicle on a dealer's premises)

Education tax credits (American Opportunity and Lifetime Learning Credits)

- 1098-T forms
- records for payment of qualified educational expenses not included on 1098-T forms

Home energy tax credits (Energy-Efficient Home Improvement and Residential Clean Energy Credits)

- records for qualified energy-saving upgrades to your home, including for exterior doors, windows, skylights, insulation, central air conditioners, water heaters, furnaces, heat pumps, home energy audits, and more
- receipts for installing qualified clean energy systems to your home, including for solar panels, wind turbines, geothermal heat pumps, battery storage units, fuel cell generators, and more
- kilowatt capacity of fuel cell systems (if applicable)

Premium tax credit (for insurance purchased through the Health Insurance Marketplace)

- 1095-A forms

Retirement savings contributions credit (Saver's Credit)

- amounts contributed to eligible retirement accounts and ABLE accounts

Taxes you've paid

You'll need records of any prepaid taxes, which are subtracted from the amount you owe on your tax return (withheld federal income taxes will also be shown on W-2 and 1099 forms).

- estimated or other tax payments made for the tax year
- prior-year refunds applied to the current tax year
- tax payments made with a request to extend the time to file

Other information

You'll also want to pull together the following information.

- bank account and routing numbers for direct deposit or tax payments
- foreign bank account information (if [Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts \(FBAR\) reporting](#) is required)
- last year's tax return for general reference and e-filing driver's license information for e-filing (optional for additional security)