



IR-2015-39: IRS Releases Tax Time Guide: Get Free Tax Help with Free IRS Online Tools

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[Radio PSAs](#)

[Tax Scams](#)

[The Tax Gap](#)

[Fact Sheets](#)

[IRS Tax Tips](#)

[Armed Forces](#)

[Latest News Home](#)

Issue Number: IR-2015-39 Inside This Issue

IRS Releases Tax Time Guide: Get Free Tax Help with Free IRS Online Tools

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service today encouraged taxpayers working on their 2014 returns to take advantage of the numerous online tools and resources available on IRS.gov.

This is the first in a series of 10 daily IRS tips called the Tax Time Guide. These tips are designed to help taxpayers navigate common tax issues as the April 15 deadline approaches.

"We are doing everything we can to help taxpayers get the assistance they need this tax season," said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. "Our phone lines are extremely busy this year, so this series will offer taxpayers tips on how to get help along with important options and issues to keep in mind as the April 15 deadline approaches."

[IRS.gov](#) and its online tools, such as the [Interactive Tax Assistant](#), can answer most taxpayer questions -- getting them the tax help they need, when they need it.

The Interactive Tax Assistant can answer a wide range of tax questions, including newer areas of the tax law, like the Affordable Care Act. It can answer questions such as:

IRS Resources

[Compliance & Enforcement](#)

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[Where to File](#)

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- [Am I eligible to claim the Premium Tax Credit?](#)
- [Am I required to make an Individual Shared Responsibility Payment?](#)

The [Interactive Tax Assistant](#) takes taxpayers through a series of questions and provides them with responses to tax law questions about tax credits, deductions and general filing questions. Taxpayers get the same answers as if they'd called and spoken with an IRS representative on the phone line, and they can print out the answers for their records.

To learn more, click on the [Tools](#) page or the IRS Services Guide for a list of the many features and applications offered by [IRS.gov](#).

Online Help for Preparing Tax Return

Taxpayers preparing their own tax return or looking for free tax preparation will find that [IRS.gov](#) provides answers to many tax questions in a user-friendly format. It's now easier than ever to navigate the site because of many redesigned pages.

Taxpayers can start by clicking on the [Filing](#) tab. It's the place to find important updates and information regarding tax return preparation and electronic filing options, including Free File. The IRS has several options to help taxpayers file their tax return. Filing electronically is the easiest way to file a complete and accurate return. This page also has links to forms and instructions.

Individuals can check the [Affordable Care Act tax provisions page](#) for helpful information about how the health care law affects their tax return. The online resources provide answers to individual questions.

Taxpayers can look at the [Online Services and Tax Information](#) for individuals section for information needed to file, pay and manage their taxes, including forms, instructions and electronic filing options.

This year for the first time, there is a searchable directory on IRS.gov that will help taxpayers [find a tax professional](#) with credentials and select qualifications to help them prepare their tax returns.

[Free File](#) Everyone can find an option to prepare and e-file tax returns for free through Free File. Taxpayers who earned \$60,000 or less in 2014 qualify for brand name tax software free of charge through a public-private partnership with manufacturers. Free File fillable forms,

the electronic version of IRS paper forms, are also available to all taxpayers regardless of income and are best suited for taxpayers who are comfortable preparing their own returns. Free File is available only through IRS.gov.

[VITA/TCE Site Locator](#) enables low-and moderate-income taxpayers to find the nearest volunteer tax help site. Through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (VITA/TCE) programs, eligible taxpayers can get help filing their return for free at one of the more than 12,000 community-based tax help sites staffed by more than 90,000 volunteers. This includes claiming tax benefits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and meeting new requirements under the [healthcare](#) law.

[EITC Assistant](#) helps individuals find out if they qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit, a tax benefit that aids millions of low-and moderate-income workers and working families. If they qualify, this credit can increase the tax refund by up to \$6,134.

Download [IRS2Go](#) for Android devices from the Google Play Store or IRS2Go for Apple devices from the App Store. Use it to check refund status, watch the IRS YouTube channel, find free tax preparation help, get IRS news as soon as it's released, subscribe to filing season updates or daily tax tips, and follow the IRS Twitter news feed, @IRSnews, to get the latest federal tax news, including information about tax law changes and important IRS programs.

In addition to various interactive tools, [IRS.gov](#) is the gateway to many more resources and answers about many tax matters. Try [Tax Topics](#), [Tax Trails](#), [Frequently Asked Questions](#), and the [IRS Tax Map](#).

Taxpayers can easily and quickly view or download any IRS form, publication or instruction booklet by visiting IRS.gov. New this year, taxpayers can download publication 17 for free and view it on most e-Readers and other mobile devices as an eBook. If taxpayers still need printed forms or instructions, they can place their order online at IRS.gov/orderforms. Publication 17, and certain other products like Form 1040 EZ and Form 1099-Misc are not available at TACs this year. Similarly, the tax forms available from community partners, like libraries, have also been reduced.

Even after taxpayers file, there are more online tools that can provide them with valuable assistance long after tax

season ends. One of the most popular is the [Where's My Refund?](#) tool available on IRS.gov or IRS2Go that enables taxpayers to track the status of their refund. Initial information will normally be available within 24 hours after the IRS receives the taxpayer's e-filed return or four weeks after the taxpayer mails a paper return to the IRS. The system updates every 24 hours, so there's no need to check more often.

For taxpayers whose concern is a tax bill they can't pay, the [Online Payment Agreement](#) tool can help them determine whether they qualify for an installment agreement with the IRS. For those whose tax obligation is even more serious, the [Offer in Compromise Pre-Qualifier](#) can help determine if they qualify for an offer in compromise, an agreement with the IRS that settles their tax liability for less than the full amount owed.

The IRS has introduced a new online resource for those who need to make a tax payment. The new IRS [Direct Pay](#) system now offers taxpayers the fastest and easiest way to pay what they owe. Available through the [Pay Your Tax Bill](#) icon on IRS.gov, this free online system allows individuals to securely pay their tax bills or make quarterly estimated tax payments, directly from checking or savings accounts without any fees or pre-registration.

Finally, the [IRS Withholding Calculator](#) helps employees make sure the amount of income tax taken out of their pay is neither too high nor too low. This tool can be particularly useful to taxpayers who, after filling out their tax returns, find that the refund or balance due was higher than expected.

Other tips in the Tax Time Guide series are available on IRS.gov.

[Back to Top](#)

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