

2020 Tax Preparation Checklist

Before you begin to prepare your 2020 income tax return, go through the following checklist. Highlight the areas that apply to you, and make sure you have that information available. Better yet, attach the list to a folder of your tax documents, and check items off as you add them to the folder.

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 and/or send payment.

- Social Security numbers and dates of birth for you, your spouse, your dependents
- Copies of last year's tax return for you and your spouse (helpful, but not required)
- Bank account number and routing number, if depositing your refund directly into your account
- If a new client, proof of identification (photo id)

Income Information:

- Economic Stimulus Amounts received throughout 2020, including stimulus payments received in January 2021. This information must be disclosed to your accountant on the total amount received.
- W-2 forms for you and your spouse
- 1099-MISC forms for you and your spouse (for any independent contractor work)
- 1099-G forms for unemployment income, or state or local tax refunds
- 1099-R, payments/distributions from IRAs or retirement plans
- 1099-INT, -DIV, -B, or K-1s for investment or interest income
- SSA-1099 for Social Security benefits received
- Business income - profit/loss statement, capital equipment information
- Rental property income and expenses: profit/loss statement, suspended loss information
- Miscellaneous income: jury duty, gambling winnings, Medical Savings Account, scholarships, etc

Adjustments to your income: This 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 (or receipts/canceled checks for tuition paid for post-high school)
- 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

Taxes Paid: Taxes paid throughout the current tax year

- State and local income taxes paid
- Real estate taxes paid
- Personal property taxes paid
- Vehicle license fees based on value of vehicle

Itemized 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
- Adoption costs: SSN of child; records of legal, medical and transportation costs
- 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
- Records/amounts of other miscellaneous tax deductions: union dues; unreimbursed employee expenses (uniforms, supplies, seminars, continuing education, publications, travel, etc.)
- Records of home business expenses, home size/office size, home expenses
- Rental property income/expenses: profit/loss statement, rental property suspended loss information

Other Information:

- 1099-C forms for cancellation of debt
- 1099-S forms for income from sale of a property
- Prior year installment sale information - Forms 6252, principal and interest collected during the year, SSN and address for payer
- Alimony received
- Estimated tax payments made during the year (self-employed)
- Prior-year refund applied to current year and/or 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