



Here are reasons people who don't normally file should file a 2021 tax return

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With tax filing season just around the corner, this is a good time for those who don't normally file to consider the benefits of filing a 2021 tax return. Filing can help them claim a refundable tax credit or get an income tax refund.

Here are some things taxpayers should consider when deciding whether to file a tax return:

Find out the general reasons to file

In most cases, income, filing status and age determine if a taxpayer must file a tax return. Other rules may apply if the taxpayer is self-employed or can be claimed as a dependent of someone else. There are other reasons when a taxpayer must file. The [Interactive Tax Assistant](#) can help someone determine if they need to file a return.

Look at tax withheld or paid

Here are a few questions for taxpayers to ask themselves:

- Did the taxpayer's employer withhold federal income tax from their pay?
- Did the taxpayer make estimated tax payments during the tax year?
- Did they overpay last year on their taxes and have it applied to their 2021 tax?

If the answer is **yes** to any of these questions, they could be due a refund. They must file a 2021 tax return to get their money.

Look into whether they can claim the earned income tax credit

A working taxpayer who earned \$57,414 or less last year could receive the EITC as a tax refund. For the 2021 tax year, the tax return taxpayers file in 2022, the earned income credit ranges from \$1,502 to \$6,728 depending on their filing status and how many children they claim on their tax return. The law allows taxpayers to use either

their 2020 income or 2021 income to calculate their EITC — taxpayers may choose whichever amount gives them a larger credit. They can check eligibility by using the [EITC Assistant](#) on IRS.gov. Taxpayers need to file a tax return to claim the EITC. By law, the IRS cannot issue refunds to taxpayers claiming EITC until mid-February.

Child tax credit or credit for other dependents

Taxpayers can claim the child tax credit if they have a qualifying child under the age of 17 and meet other qualifications. Other taxpayers may be eligible for the credit for other dependents. This includes people who have:

- Dependent children who are age 17 or older at the end of 2020
- Parents or other qualifying individuals they support

The [Child-Related Tax Benefits](#) page of IRS.gov can help people determine if they qualify for these two credits.

Education credits

There are two higher education credits that reduce the amount of tax someone owes on their tax return. One is the [American opportunity tax credit](#) and the other is the [lifetime learning credit](#). The taxpayer, their spouse or their dependent must have been a student enrolled at least half time for one academic period to qualify. The taxpayer may [qualify for one of these credits](#) even if they don't owe any taxes. [Form 8863, Education Credits](#) is used to claim the credit when filing the tax return.

Recovery rebate credit

Individuals who didn't qualify for a third Economic Impact Payment or got less than the full amount, may be eligible to claim the 2021 [recovery rebate credit](#) based on their 2021 tax year information. If they're eligible, they'll need to file a 2021 tax return even if they don't usually file a tax return. The credit will reduce any tax owed for 2021 or be included in the tax refund.