



The 2018 gift tax return deadline is almost here

Did you make large gifts to your children, grandchildren or other heirs last year? If so, it's important to determine whether you're required to file a 2018 gift tax return — or whether filing one would be beneficial even if it isn't required.

Filing requirements

Generally, you must file a gift tax return for 2018 if, during the tax year, you made gifts:

- That exceeded the \$15,000-per-recipient gift tax annual exclusion (other than to your U.S. citizen spouse),
- That you wish to split with your spouse to take advantage of your combined \$30,000 annual exclusion,
- That exceeded the \$152,000 annual exclusion for gifts to a noncitizen spouse,
- To a Section 529 college savings plan and wish to accelerate up to five years' worth of annual exclusions (\$75,000) into 2018,
- Of *future* interests — such as remainder interests in a trust — regardless of the amount, or
- Of jointly held or community property.

Keep in mind that you'll owe gift tax only to the extent an exclusion doesn't apply and you've used up your lifetime gift and estate tax exemption (\$11.18 million for 2018). As you can see, some transfers require a return even if you don't owe tax.

No return required

No gift tax return is required if your gifts for the year consist solely of gifts that are tax-free because they qualify as:

- Annual exclusion gifts,
- Present interest gifts to a U.S. citizen spouse,
- Educational or medical expenses paid *directly* to a school or health care provider, or
- Political or charitable contributions.

But if you transferred hard-to-value property, such as artwork or interests in a family-owned business, consider filing a gift tax return even if you're not required to. Adequate disclosure of the transfer in a return triggers the statute of limitations, generally preventing the IRS from challenging your valuation more than three years after you file.

Be ready for April 15

The gift tax return deadline is the same as the income tax filing deadline. For 2018 returns, it's April 15, 2019 — or October 15, 2019, if you file for an extension. But keep in mind that, if you owe gift tax, the payment deadline is April 15, regardless of whether you file for an extension. If you're not sure whether you must (or should) file a 2018 gift tax return, contact us.