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Find a qualified tax professional using IRS website resources

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WASHINGTON — With the federal income tax deadline just around the corner, the Internal Revenue Service wants to remind taxpayers that IRS.gov offers tips on finding a qualified tax professional.

Over 84 million tax returns were prepared by a paid return preparer last year. Though most tax professionals provide honest, high-quality service, taxpayers should keep in mind these basic tips when [selecting a tax professional](#):

- Choose a trusted preparer. Taxpayers entrust vital personal data with the person preparing their tax return, including Social Security numbers and information on income and investments.
- Review the tax return carefully before signing. Taxpayers are legally responsible for what's on their tax return, regardless of whether someone else prepared it. If something does not look right, don't hesitate to ask questions.
- Make sure the preparer signs the return and includes their [Preparer Tax Identification Number \(PTIN\)](#).
- Never sign a blank tax return. Consider it a red flag when a taxpayer is asked to sign a blank tax return.
- Ask about service fees. Avoid preparers who base fees on a percentage of their client's refund or boast bigger refunds than their competition.

Taxpayers can use several options to help find a tax preparer. One resource is [Choosing a Tax Professional](#), which includes a wealth of consumer guidance for selecting a tax professional. There are various types of tax return preparers, including enrolled agents, certified public accountants, attorneys and some who don't have a professional credential.

The [Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers with Credentials and Select Qualifications](#) is a free searchable and sortable database. It includes the name, city, state and zip code of credentialed return preparers who are CPAs, enrolled agents or attorneys, as well as those who have completed the requirements for the IRS [Annual Filing Season Program](#). A search of the database can help taxpayers verify credentials and qualifications of tax professionals or locate a tax professional in their geographic area.

The IRS requires anyone who prepares any federal tax return for compensation to have a PTIN. For 2020, the IRS has issued more than 773,000 PTINs.



There is also a page with [IRS Tax Pro Association Partners](#) that includes links to national nonprofit tax professional groups that can help taxpayers seek [the right type of qualified help](#) from a tax preparer.

More resources:

- [Things to remember when choosing a tax preparer](#)
- [How to Choose a Tax Return Preparer](#)
- [When, and how, do I file a complaint about a tax preparer?](#)
- [Most taxpayers eligible for free federal and free state tax return preparation](#)