



**UNITED WAY**  
Southern  
Cameron County

**V.I.T.A.**  
VOLUNTEER INCOME  
TAX ASSISTANCE

# **VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE WORKBOOK**



# VITA VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

[Click here to be added to our database for future announcements.](#)

## Important usernames and passwords

Practice Lab:

Username: \_\_\_\_\_

Password: \_\_\_\_\_

LinkLearnCertification

Username: \_\_\_\_\_

Password: \_\_\_\_\_



This workbook belongs to:

\_\_\_\_\_

# HISTORY

Welcome to United Way of Southern Cameron County. We thank you for your support and dedication to our community.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) grant program is an IRS initiative designed to support free tax preparation service for the underserved through various partner organizations. This service helps low- to moderate-income individuals, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and limited English speakers file their taxes each year. IRS awards matching funds to these support organizations that offer free tax preparation services during the tax filing season at locations in all 50 states and the District of Columbia ([irs.gov](https://irs.gov)).

UWSCC began its collaboration with the Internal Revenue Service in 2003. UWSCC formed a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) coalition of community partners called the Cameron County Economic Opportunities Coalition (CCEOC or VITA coalition). Our goal then and now is to provide free tax assistance to low-to-moderate-income taxpayers in the lower Rio Grande Valley in South Texas. The coalition expanded into Willacy County in 2017. United Way is the lead agent of the coalition, acting as the program partner for the IRS. This is the 23rd year of UWSCC's VITA work. Under United Way's leadership, the VITA program grew from 4 volunteers at the community college preparing 312 returns claiming \$123,540 Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) to a large coalition of 11 VITA sites filing 4,777 tax returns bringing \$3.5 Million EITC with 160 volunteers in 2025. UWSCC's role is to market the program, recruit and train volunteers, recruit, and train partner agencies, ensure VITA site performance and adherence to IRS Quality Assurance Guidelines, monitor site security plans, and leverage resources to support the coalition.

## Participating sites for TY2025

### **Brownsville**

Porter ECHS  
Veterans ECHS  
Hanna ECHS  
Rivera ECHS  
BHS  
UTRGV  
ITECC-TSC

### **Port Isabel**

Port Isabel HS

### **Los Fresnos**

Los Fresnos HS  
Ethel Whipple Memorial Library

### **San Benito**

San Benito HS

# COALITION RESULTS

## Coalition (Cameron and Willacy Counties, Texas)

Tax Year	# of Volunteers	# of Tax Returns	Federal Refund Issued	Returns with EITC	Total Earned Income Credits (EITC)	Returns with CTC & ACTC	Total Child Credits (CTC and ACTC) (Refundable and Non Refundable)
2003	4	312	N/A	84	\$123,540	39	\$33,013
2004	49	630	\$678,865	214	\$318,276	90	\$109,606
2005	57	1,065	\$1,478,752	312	\$785,477	136	\$213,123
2006	65	1,195	\$1,990,864	558	\$1,017,441	255	\$283,598
2007	56	1,820	\$2,540,100	683	\$1,347,977	329	\$381,676
2008	67	1,974	\$3,530,107	879	\$1,652,361	462	\$559,414
2009	87	1,570	\$3,118,888	735	\$1,434,727	410	\$539,214
2010	107	1,623	\$3,250,146	750	\$1,444,134	419	\$550,298
2011	117	2,340	\$4,846,988	1,057	\$2,177,346	542	\$743,905
2012	195	2,561	\$5,178,433	1,186	\$2,486,701	651	\$1,612,960
2013	194	3,296	\$6,295,486	1,454	\$3,119,753	746	\$1,873,562
2014	303	3,810	\$7,073,120	1,506	\$3,683,404	1,552	\$2,100,818
2015	290	4,397	\$8,999,877	1,842	\$4,296,911	1,810	\$2,495,157
2016	279	4,624	\$9,817,651	2,028	\$4,821,173	1,240	\$1,405,596
2017	337	4,825	\$10,369,916	2,074	\$4,922,755	1,301	\$1,470,344
2018	346	5,159	\$10,762,306	2,074	\$4,786,434	1,544	\$2,118,117
2019 COVID19	448	5,111	\$11,107,948	1,934	\$4,721,473	1,656	\$2,273,291
2020 COVID19	179	3,279	\$7,418,039	1,174	\$2,508,694	1,318	\$1,484,854
2021 COVID19	291	4,241	\$8,571,833	1,791	\$3,342,475	961	\$2,206,819
2022	284	4,961	\$6,995,829	1,320	\$2,804,954	1,245	\$1,726,859
2023	313	4,858	\$7,820,125	1,508	\$3,412,710	1,466	\$2,023,331
2024	169	4,777	\$7,819,693	1,537	\$3,573,332	1,479	\$2,060,207
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,237</b>	<b>68,428</b>	<b>\$129,664,966</b>		<b>\$58,782,048</b>		<b>\$28,265,762</b>

# Path to Volunteering

**Welcome!** This page will introduce you the path of of becoming a volunteer. Ensure to cover everything in this workbook to help you get prepared to serve the public. It might seem a lot, but practice is everything. First thing first, ensure to submit a [VITA Volunteer Application](#) to add you to our database to communicate with the VITA Program Coordinator with any questions.

There will be a lot of resources to help get certified and gain knowledge about the tax law. Do not be overwhelmed, you can always ask for a one-on-one orientation.

## Step 1 - Study

Studying is a big part of becoming a VITA volunteer. It is expected for a volunteer to learn and understand the basics of tax law and tax preparation. Read the bullets below for more information on what to expect going forward.

Volunteer Tax Preparers study 3 topics for testing: VITA Tax Law, Volunteer Standards of Conduct, and Intake/ Interview & Quality Review. You choose the level of tax law to which you will certify (Basic or Advanced).

## Step 2 - Practice

Putting into practice what you have learned helps you retain information and understand tax preparation. Remember that once you start to volunteer, you will be not doing scenarios but actual returns. The community will be expecting volunteers to be knowledgeable and trustful with their information.

## Step 3 - Test

Once you have mastered practicing problems, you may start taking your exams at your own pace. Refer to your tax resources to complete and pass the exams. You have two chances to pass the exam.

## Step 4 - Mandatory Training

You are one step away from becoming a volunteer! Volunteer Tax Preparers are required to attend a mandatory training. Reach out the [vitaoutreach@unitedwayrgv.org](mailto:vitaoutreach@unitedwayrgv.org) for more information.

## Step 6 - Public Service

Congratulations! You're ready to volunteer!

# Resources

As mentioned in the 'History' page, this program was implemented by the IRS. The IRS publishes publications for volunteers to ensure they familiarize themselves with tax law. Along with those publications, other VITA sites, nationally, create their own study platforms. Below are some of the resources.

## [Publication 4012](#)

Covers basic and advance tax laws. This publication also covers what is in scope for the VITA program (what we can prepare and cannot) and how to use the system. It is available online and in print. Call the United Way office to check for availability.

## [Publication 6744](#)

Contains the exams to certify. What exams to take will be covered later in the workbook along with the type of volunteer roles. Each volunteer role has it's exam path.

## [LinkLearn Certification](#)

This website was established by the IRS. You will be using this website to access the 'Practice Lab' and to later input your exam answers to gain certification. You will need to create an account. Once you have passed your exams, you will need to download Form 13615 and have it signed by a Site Coordinator before volunteering at a site. This form is your transcript showing you passed your exams.

## [LinkLearn Certification- Practice Lab](#)

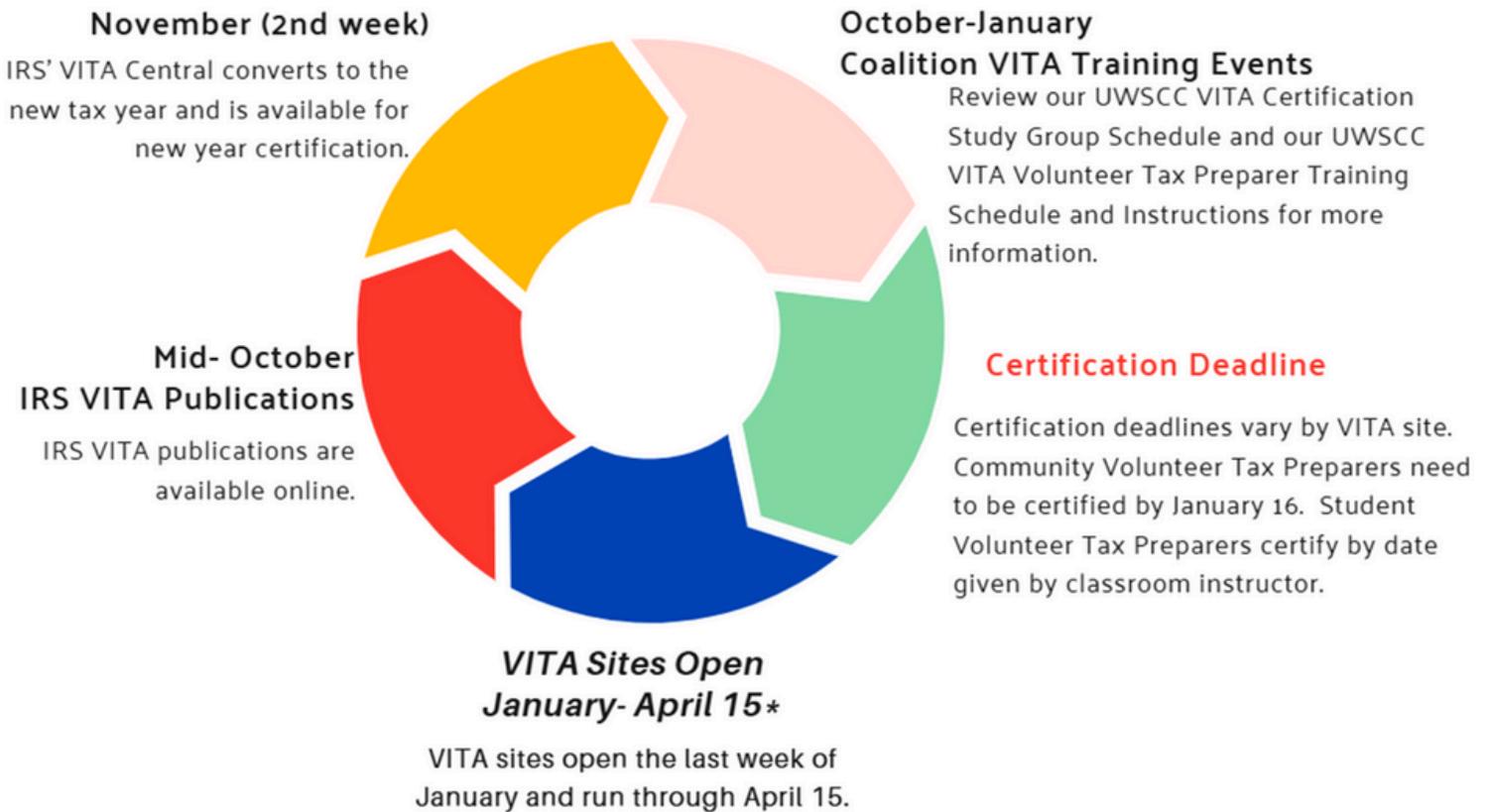
This website can be accessed through LinkLearn Certification by going scrolling down to the 'Quick Links.' You will need a universal password to access this site. Contact [vitaoutreach@unitedwayrgv.org](mailto:vitaoutreach@unitedwayrgv.org) for this password. You will need to create an account for this site. This software, TaxSlayer, is essentially the same software used a site to prepare returns. You can practice scenarios and create as many mistakes as you feel like. The goal is for you to know how to navigate in and gain experience in preparing. Of course, you will need to also study tax law.

## [Vitaresources.net](#)

This awesome training platform was created by Mary Meador, an awesome VITA volunteer, somewhere in the U.S. You are welcomed to use her training path as this workbook does not go that into detail as Mary's site does.

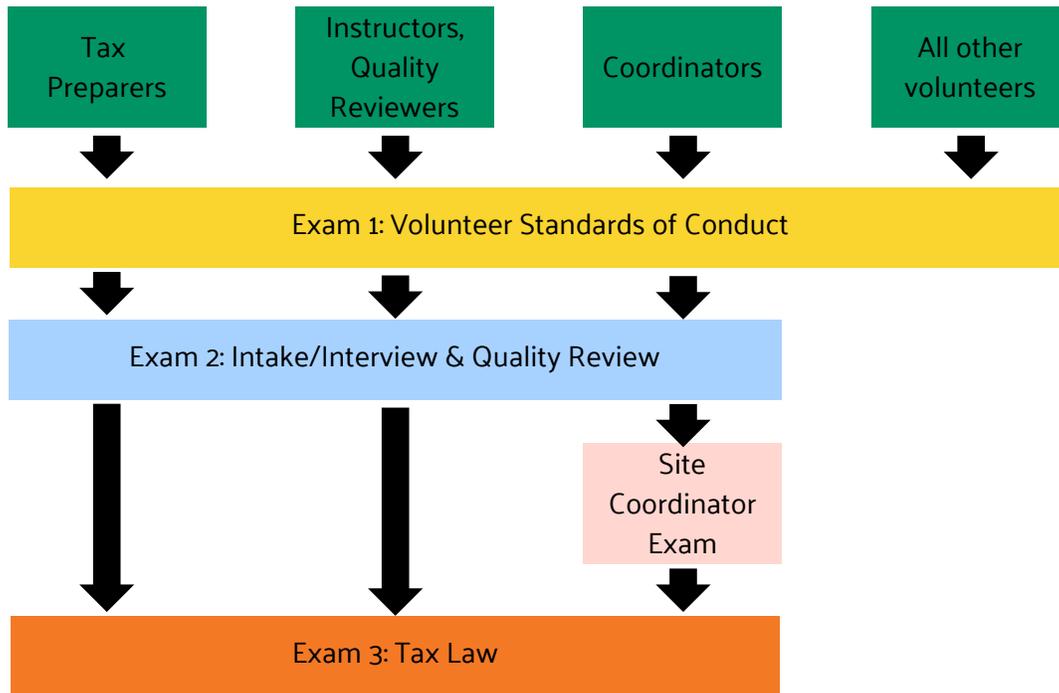
More publications will be introduced later in the workbook.

# Program Cycle



# EXAMS

Refer to Publication 6744 for these exams.



## Volunteer Standards of Conduct

- 10 questions

## Intake/interview & Quality Review

- 10 questions

## Basic Exam

- 30 questions
  - W-2s, 1099-INT, 1099-R, Child Care,

## Advance Exam

- 35 questions
  - Health Insurance, Self-Employment, 1099-R

**Note:**



ALL exams are open book. Refer to your resources and above all Publication 4012. Do not refer to a simple Google search.

# Volunteer Roles

## Responsibilities

VITA offers a variety of roles where you can both develop new skills and apply the ones you already possess. While the responsibilities may vary, all volunteers share the core duties outlined below:

- Complete Volunteer Standards of Conduct training and complete and sign Form 13615, Volunteer Standards of Conduct Agreement
- Pass each exam with an 80% or higher.
- Ensure no compensation of any kind is accepted for the volunteer services provided
- Maintain confidentiality and protect taxpayer information
- Take pride in performing tasks completely and accurately
- Interact with taxpayers, volunteers, partners and IRS in a professional and courteous manner
- Be friendly, dependable and flexible
- Adhere to Title VI by not denying service to anyone based on race, color, sex, age, national origin or disability
- Support VITA/TCE programs

## Greeter & Screeners

Provide support to the site and volunteer preparers by screening all taxpayers to ensure the taxpayer has necessary information and documents required to complete a tax return. Screeners can not answer any tax law questions or determine certification levels unless they are certified in tax law.

### Responsibilities:

- Develop a log or check sheet to sign in taxpayers needing assistance.
- Greet all taxpayers visiting the site to create a pleasant atmosphere.
- Give each taxpayer Form 13614-C, Intake/Interview & Quality Review Sheet.
- Screen taxpayers to determine the type of assistance they will need.
- Ensure the taxpayer has brought the required documents (e.g. valid picture identification, Social Security card(s), W-2, 1099's, last year's return) from which a tax return can be completed.
- Monitor site traffic to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for all taxpayers being checked in at the site to receive assistance.
- Explain the site's return preparation process to the taxpayer.
- Monitor site traffic to ensure enough time is allowed for all taxpayers to receive assistance.
- Basic tax knowledge (Form 1040, Form 1040A and Form 1040EZ) is a plus but not required.



**Note:** A screener assisting taxpayers with any tax law topics, must be certified at the appropriate level (Basic or Advance), before providing assistance. A certified screener can determine the required certification levels needed for return preparation based on the taxpayer's documentation and refer customers with out of scope returns to a tax practitioner.

## Tax Preparer

Provide free tax return preparation for eligible taxpayers. Establish the greatest degree of public trust, to provide top quality service and uphold the highest of ethical standards.



### Responsibilities:

- Complete the Volunteer Standards of Conduct.
- Complete the intake/interview and quality review certification.
- Complete tax law and electronic filing software training.
- Prepare only tax returns within your level of tax law certification.
- Provide high-quality tax return preparation to all taxpayers.
- Using the appropriate Intake and Interview form, interview taxpayer to determine if all income, deductions and allowable credits are claimed.
- Include taxpayer in the preparation of the return.
- Refer taxpayers with returns out of the scope of the VITA/TCE program to explore Free File options or use a professional return preparer.
- Engage the taxpayer when preparing the tax return, to ensure understanding of the information on the intake sheet. Advise the taxpayer that they are ultimately responsible for the information on the return.

## Quality Reviewer

Quality reviewers conduct quality reviews on all tax returns prepared at the site to ensure every taxpayer visiting the site receives top quality service and that the tax returns are error-free. SPEC recommends quality reviewers be experienced in tax law application.



### Responsibilities:

- Certify at the Intermediate level, at minimum. For more complicated returns, certify at the Advanced.
- Conduct a quality review using Form 13614-C, on all returns prepared at the site.
- Before asking the taxpayer to sign Form 8879 or the return, advise the taxpayer that he/she is ultimately responsible for the information on the return.
- Explain to the taxpayer that by signing the return, it guarantees that the taxpayer has examined the return and its accompanying forms and schedules for accuracy.
- Explain to the taxpayer that signing the return certifies that the taxpayer has examined the return, including all the forms and schedules for accuracy, and they are signing the return under penalty of perjury.
- Provide feedback to your Volunteer Tax Preparers regarding any errors made on tax returns.

## Site Coordinator

As the coordinator, their primary role is to verify all volunteers are certified to prepare tax returns at the appropriate level and to follow all site operating procedures.

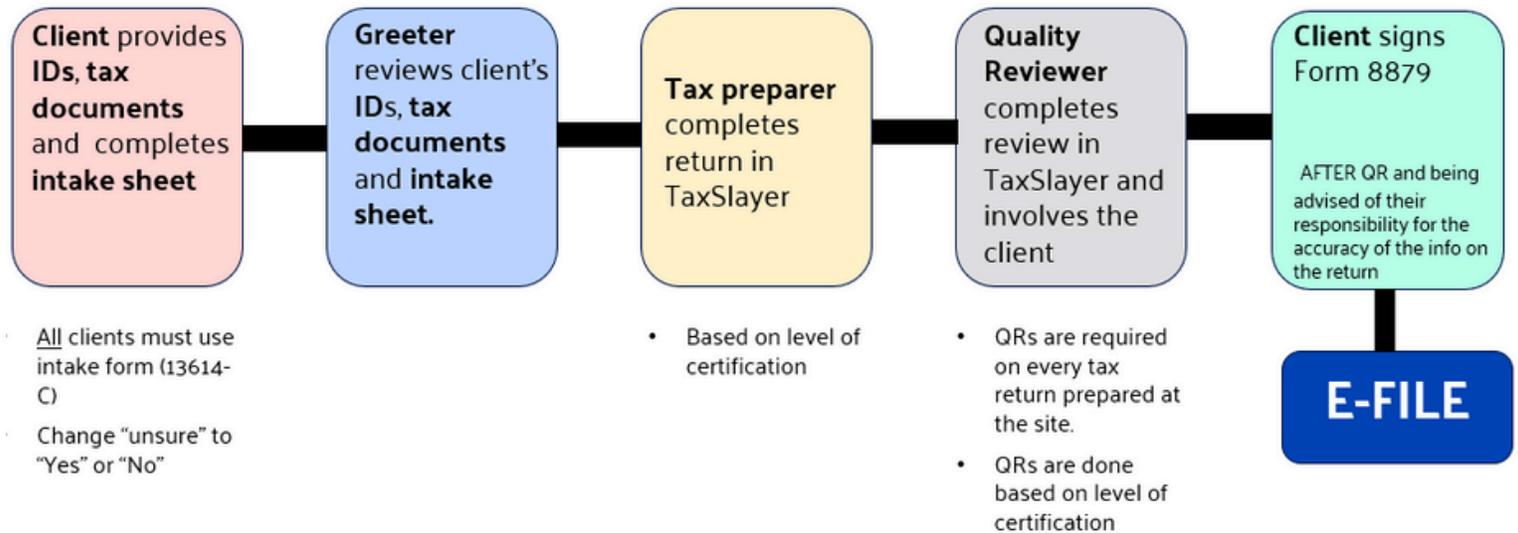
### Responsibilities:



- Complete SPEC Site Coordinator Training.
- Complete Volunteer Standards of Conduct (Ethics) certification.
- Complete VITA/TCE Intake/Interview and Quality Review certification.
- Supervise volunteers working at the site.
- Develop a process to explain to volunteers the logistics and systems used at your site.
- Assign specific roles for all volunteers when installing your software.
- Limit volunteer access in the tax software to only those duties the volunteer performs. Limit access of the Administrator roles to only volunteers who perform those functions.
- Monitor your site's intake and interview process and ensure all volunteers use Form 13614-C, Intake/ Interview and Quality Review Sheet, for every tax return prepared.
- Establish a process to ensure all IRS-certified volunteer preparers and quality reviewers are assigned returns within their level of certification and within scope of the VITA/TCE program (see the Scope of Service Chart in the Publication 4012, VITA/TCE Volunteer Resource Guide).
- Create a process to show everyone who made changes to a tax return, including the preparers, quality reviewers, reject correctors, transmitters, etc.
- Ensure all IRS-certified volunteer preparers are having a discussion with the taxpayer while reviewing the information on Form 13614-C prior to preparing the return.
- Ensure a process is in place to conduct 100% quality reviews by a designated or peer-to-peer quality reviewer. Publication 4012 includes the Quality Review Checklist, which describes all action items the reviewer must complete during the Quality Review Process.
- Ensure all taxpayers and spouses provide photo identification and that volunteers confirm SSN or ITIN for everyone listed on the tax return.
- Ensure all taxpayers with returns out of the scope of the VITA/TCE program are told they are not eligible for traditional VITA/TCE tax return preparation and advise them to explore IRS Free File options or use a professional tax preparer.

**Note:** A site coordinator can override site policies. For example, if a client does not bring their ID/last year's copy/SSN card, the site coordinator can approve to take them in if they are previous clients and are known to the site (3-5 years). A NEW client must always present original IDs and SSN for everyone in the tax return. No copies will be accepted.

# SITE PROCESS



# PUBLICATIONS

## PUB 4299 Privacy, Confidentiality, and Civil Rights

- 1. Volunteer Protection Act (VPA) Coverage** – Volunteers in the VITA/TCE programs are generally protected from liability for negligent acts performed within their scope of responsibilities, though intentional or reckless misconduct is not covered.
- 2. Penalties for Unauthorized Disclosure** – IRC §7216 imposes criminal penalties (up to one year imprisonment and/or fines) for knowingly or recklessly disclosing or misusing taxpayer information obtained during tax return preparation.
- 3. Taxpayer Participation Requirement** – Tax returns must be prepared with the taxpayer present, except for approved exceptions (joint returns, minor children, or approved Virtual VITA/TCE models).
- 4. Privacy During the Interview** – Sites must arrange tax preparation areas to protect taxpayer privacy and prevent unauthorized persons from overhearing or viewing sensitive information.
- 5. Identity Validation** – Volunteers must verify each taxpayer’s identity using valid photo ID and Social Security or ITIN documentation before preparing or filing a return.

## PUB 4299 Privacy, Confidentiality, and Civil Rights

6. **Taxpayer Consent Rules** – Written taxpayer consent is required before using or disclosing tax return information for non-return-preparation purposes (e.g., marketing, fundraising with identifiable data).
7. **Security Plans** – All VITA/TCE sites must maintain a security plan (Form 15272) to safeguard taxpayer data, covering both physical and electronic security measures.
8. **Minimum Security Practices** – Requirements include strong passwords (changed at least every 90 days), encrypted storage, secure wireless use (WPA2/AES), shredding of paper records, and prompt deletion of taxpayer data after the filing season.
9. **Data Breach & Equipment Loss Reporting** – Partners must immediately report suspected breaches or stolen/lost equipment to IRS territory offices, local police, and relevant state authorities; risk assessments determine if taxpayers must be notified.
10. **Volunteer Standards of Conduct & Civil Rights Compliance** – All volunteers must complete ethics certification and sign Form 13615. Partners must also comply with federal civil rights laws, including providing meaningful access to individuals with limited English proficiency or disabilities.

## PUB 5101 VITA/TCE Intake/Interview and Quality Review Training

1. **Purpose of Training** – Ensures taxpayers receive accurate tax return preparation through consistent intake, interview, and quality review processes, primarily using Form 13614-C.
2. **Volunteer Certification** – Only IRS tax law certified volunteers may answer tax law questions, prepare or review returns. Certification is required annually; non-tax law roles (e.g., greeters) must pass Volunteer Standards of Conduct (VSC) tests.
3. **Form 13614-C Requirement** – Must be completed for every tax return at VITA/TCE sites. It collects taxpayer information and guides the interview. Sites not using it violate Quality Site Requirement #2.
4. **Intake Process** – Volunteers greet taxpayers, verify IDs, collect required documents (photo ID, Social Security/ITIN cards, proof of income/expenses), determine certification level and scope of service, then assign returns accordingly.
5. **Identity Verification** – Photo ID is required for all taxpayers and spouses. Site coordinators can make rare exceptions only for those “known to the site.”
6. **Interview Process** – Certified volunteers review Form 13614-C, ask probing/open-ended questions, confirm filing status, dependents, and income, and ensure completeness and accuracy before entering data into tax software.
7. **Due Diligence & Clarification** – Volunteers must clarify inconsistent or questionable information and may decline to prepare a return if the information is unreliable.
8. **Quality Review Process** – Every return must be reviewed by another certified volunteer (not self-review). Two methods: Designated Reviewer (preferred) or Peer-to-Peer. Review includes taxpayer participation and verifying all supporting documents.
9. **Final Steps** – Errors must be corrected before filing. Best practice includes comparing with prior year’s return to ensure nothing is missed. Taxpayers must be advised of their responsibility before signing.
10. **Taxpayer Signature & Filing** – Returns cannot be filed until quality review is complete and taxpayers sign Form 8879 (IRS e-file Signature Authorization). For joint returns, both spouses must be present unless a site coordinator grants the limited “known to the site” exception

During the Intake and Quality Review the interviewer should verify:

- Identity
- Return is within the scope and certification level.
- Taxpayer has all of their documentation.
- Clarify any confusion.
  - Make changes to the intake sheet, ask questions.
  - “You marked that no one else lived in your home. Is that correct?”
  - “I see that you and your husband both worked, yet you did not indicate you paid any childcare expenses for your 3-year-old son.”
  - “I see that you are over the age of 65, but you did not indicate that you received Social Security benefits.”
  - “I see that you answered “No” to the question ‘Can anyone claim you on their tax return?’ But since you’re a student living with you parents, I’m wondering if they can claim you?”

## PUB 5166 VITA/TCE Volunteer Quality Site Requirements

1. **Purpose of QSRs** – The Quality Site Requirements (QSRs) ensure accurate tax return preparation and consistent site operations for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs.
2. **Site Reviews & Corrective Actions** – IRS and partners use review forms to measure compliance with QSRs. Non-adherence requires immediate corrective actions, ideally within five business days.
3. **QSR #1 – Certification** – All volunteers must complete required certifications (ethics, intake/interview, tax law, and any specialty certifications) through Link & Learn Taxes before assisting taxpayers.
4. **QSR #2 – Intake/Interview & Quality Review** – Every taxpayer must complete Form 13614-C. Volunteers must interview taxpayers, verify documentation, and conduct a separate quality review before filing.
5. **QSR #3 – ID & TIN Verification** – Volunteers must confirm taxpayer identities with original photo ID and validate all Social Security Numbers (SSNs) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs) before return preparation.
6. **QSR #4 – Reference Materials** – Sites must have access (print or electronic) to IRS reference materials including Publications 17, 4012, and 4299, as well as Volunteer Tax Alerts.
7. **QSR #5 – Volunteer Agreement** – All volunteers must sign Form 13615 (Volunteer Standards of Conduct Agreement). Coordinators must verify identity with government-issued ID and track volunteer certifications.
8. **QSR #6 – Timely Filing** – Returns must be e-filed within three calendar days after all steps (intake, review, Form 8879 signatures) are completed. Stockpiling returns is prohibited.
9. **QSR #7 – Civil Rights** – Sites must display Publication 4053 (“Your Civil Rights are Protected”) in English and Spanish (and other languages if needed). This ensures taxpayers know how to report discrimination.
10. **QSR #10 – Security, Privacy & Confidentiality** – Sites must follow Publication 4299, including having an annual security plan, safeguarding taxpayer information, restricting software access, and properly disposing of records

## PUB 4012 Volunteer Resource Guide

### What it's used for

1. **Step-by-step guidance** on common tax situations (filing status, dependents, income, credits, deductions)
2. Decision trees, charts, and worksheets to **help determine eligibility** and correct reporting
3. **Scope limitations** so volunteers know what they can and cannot prepare
4. **Quick answers** without having to dig through the full Internal Revenue Code or long IRS publications

### What it is not

1. It's not a taxpayer instruction book
2. It's not authoritative law (the tax code and regulations still control)
3. It's not meant for complex or out-of-scope returns

# VSC

## Volunteer Standards of Conduct

It's designed to ensure that tax returns prepared in VITA/TCE are accurate and of high quality from start to finish. The training helps volunteers understand how to reliably collect information, conduct interviews, and review returns before filing.

- **Quality Review Process**

- Another certified volunteer reviews every return using Form 13614-C and supporting documents.

**Example:** Reviewer corrects a student loan interest deduction error before filing.

- **Taxpayer Participation & Communication**

- Taxpayers are involved in review and must understand their return before signing.

**Example:** Explaining to a taxpayer that signing the return is under penalty of perjury.

- **Common Errors & Focus Areas**

- Includes missing income, incorrect filing status, dependent errors, and incomplete forms.

**Example:** Checking that all W-2s and 1099s are entered and match documentation.

- **Connection to Due Diligence & Ethics**

- Proper intake, interview, and review uphold Volunteer Standards of Conduct and protect taxpayers and volunteers.

**Example:** Documenting every correction or verification step to comply with program rules.

## Exam 1

As a volunteer in the VITA/TCE program, you must adhere to the following Volunteer Standards of Conduct:

**VSC #1** - Follow the Quality Site Requirements (QSR). (There are 10 QSR)

**Example:** A volunteer ensures that every return is reviewed by a certified Quality Reviewer before it's e-filed, following the "two-certified volunteer" process.

**VSC #2** - Do not accept payment, ask for donations, or accept refund payments for federal or state tax return preparation from customers.

**Example:** A taxpayer offers a volunteer a \$20 gift card as thanks. The volunteer politely declines and explains that IRS rules prohibit any payment or gifts.

**VSC #3** - Do not solicit business from taxpayers you help or use the information you gained about them (their information) for any direct or indirect personal benefit for yourself or any other specific individual.

**Example:** A volunteer also works as a paid financial advisor. They cannot offer investment services to taxpayers they help at the VITA/TCE site, nor use taxpayer contact information to market services.

**VSC #4** - Do not knowingly prepare false returns.

**Example:** A taxpayer asks the volunteer to include an extra dependent to increase their refund. The volunteer refuses because knowingly adding false information violates the standard.

**VSC #5** - Do not engage in criminal, infamous, dishonest, notoriously disgraceful conduct, or any other conduct considered to have a negative effect on the VITA/TCE program.

**Example:** A volunteer uses someone else's login credentials to access the tax software without authorization. This dishonest action violates program rules and could lead to removal.

**VSC #6** - Treat all taxpayers in a professional, courteous, and respectful manner.

**Example:** Even if a taxpayer becomes frustrated and raises their voice, the volunteer remains calm, respectful, and professional – explaining the process without arguing back.

**Confidentiality Statement:** All tax information you receive from taxpayers in your volunteer capacity is strictly confidential and should not, under any circumstances, be disclosed to unauthorized individuals.

# VSC - Quiz

## 1. True or False:

All VITA/TCE volunteers, regardless of their role, must pass the Volunteer Standards of Conduct (VSC) test before participating in the program.

## 2. Which of the following is NOT one of the six VSC?

- a) Follow the intake/interview and quality review process
- b) Not accept payments for preparing tax returns
- c) Knowingly prepare returns outside the scope of the program
- d) Protect taxpayer information

## 3. A taxpayer offers you a \$20 gift card to thank you for preparing their return. What should you do?

- a) Accept it since it's under \$50
- b) Accept it only if you share with your site coordinator
- c) Politely decline because gifts are not allowed
- d) Accept it if it's food or drink

## 4. If a volunteer is found violating the VSC, what may happen?

- a) Nothing, as long as it was unintentional
- b) Dismissal from the VITA/TCE program
- c) The taxpayer's return will be rejected by the IRS automatically
- d) The site will be shut down permanently

**Note:** This is just a quiz, not the real exam. Refer to Publication 6744 page 14. You have two attempts to pass this exam.



# INTAKE/INTERVIEW & QUALITY REVIEW

It's designed to ensure that tax returns prepared in VITA/TCE are accurate and of high quality from start to finish. The training helps volunteers understand how to reliably collect information, conduct interviews, and review returns before filing.

- **Purpose of Training**
  - Ensures accurate, high-quality tax returns through proper intake, interview, and quality review processes.  
**Example:** Volunteers learn how to systematically collect and verify taxpayer information.
- **Form 13614-C (Intake/Interview & Quality Review Sheet)**
  - Standardized form for collecting taxpayer data, income, expenses, dependents, and notes for quality review.  
**Example:** Volunteer updates the form if the taxpayer forgets to include a W-2.
- **Certification Requirement**
  - Volunteers preparing or reviewing returns must complete the training and pass the test (≥80%).  
**Example:** Only certified volunteers handle advanced tax returns or military returns.
- **Intake Process**
  - Volunteers greet taxpayers, explain the process, verify documents, and complete Form 13614-C.  
**Example:** Confirming a taxpayer's SSN, photo ID, and dependent information during intake.
- **Form 13614-C (Intake/Interview & Quality Review Sheet)**
  - Volunteers clarify, verify, and collect missing or inconsistent information from taxpayers.  
**Example:** Asking about a dependent's residency to confirm eligibility for a credit.
- **Certification Requirement**
  - Volunteers handle only in-scope returns and assign returns based on certification level.  
**Example:** Referring a complex business return to a certified advanced volunteer.

# DUE DILIGENCE

**Due diligence** is a core part of volunteering with VITA/TCE because it ensures taxpayers' returns are prepared **accurately, honestly, and legally**.

## What “Due Diligence” means in VITA/TCE

- Acting carefully, thoroughly, and responsibly when preparing tax returns.
- Verifying information, not just accepting it at face value.
- Asking clarifying questions when things don't make sense.
- Documenting taxpayer responses and only reporting what is supported.
- Protecting taxpayers (and yourself) from errors, penalties, or fraud.

## Verify Taxpayer Identity

- Always check government-issued photo ID and Social Security/ITIN cards.

**Example:** A taxpayer shows a driver's license and their child's SSN card before claiming the child as a dependent.

## Review Documentation

- Taxpayers must provide forms (W-2s, 1099s, 1098s, etc.) or other valid records.

**Example:** A self-employed taxpayer provides a notebook of earnings; you ask clarifying questions to ensure income and expenses are reasonable.

## Ask Clarifying Questions

- If something seems inconsistent, ask politely but firmly.

**Example:** A taxpayer claims a dependent but the dependent lives out of state with another parent. You ask questions to confirm residency and support requirements.

## Avoid Assumptions

- Never “fill in the blanks” for the taxpayer.

**Example:** If a taxpayer says they “probably” paid \$3,000 in childcare, you must ask for receipts or statements – not just estimate the number.

## Record Complete & Accurate Information

- Only enter what is supported and provided by the taxpayer.

**Example:** If a taxpayer cannot substantiate an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) claim, you must not include it on the return.

## When in doubt, make an effort to find the answer

- Seek assistance from the coordinator
- Seek assistance from a tax preparer with more experience
- Reschedule or suggest the taxpayer come back when a more experienced tax preparer is available
- Reference or research publications (i.e. Publication 17, Publication 4012, Publication 596, etc.)
- Research [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)
- Call the VITA/TCE Hotline at 1-800-829-VITA (8482)
- Research the Interactive Tax Assistance (ITA) on [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) to address tax law issues
- Advise taxpayers to seek assistance from a professional tax preparer.

# I/I & QR - Quiz

**1. When reviewing Form 13614-C, what should a preparer do if a taxpayer leaves a question blank?**

- a) Ignore it if most of the form is complete
- b) Mark it as "N/A" or add comments after discussing it with the taxpayer
- c) Fill it in based on their best guess
- d) Skip it and let the quality reviewer handle it

**2. A taxpayer says they earned \$15,000 in self-employment income but provides no records. They also claim \$20,000 in expenses. You feel uncomfortable with the numbers. What should you do?**

- a) Prepare the return anyway since they insist
- b) Estimate the numbers
- c) Stop and seek assistance from the site coordinator
- d) Refuse to prepare any return for self-employed taxpayers

**3. Which of the following is required during the intake process?**

- a) Verify taxpayer identity with photo ID
- b) Assign return based on volunteer certification level
- c) Provide and review Form 13614-C
- d) All of the above

**4. Volunteers must not begin entering information into the \_\_\_\_\_ until the interview and Form 13614-C review are complete.**

# Form 13614-C

Form 13614-C, also known as the intake sheet, is a form that every clients must fill out, without any exception. It gathers all the personal information for every individual that will be included in the tax return. It is very important that all questions are answered to the best of the client's ability. The screener will be responsible to ensure that everything has been filled out.

Department of the Treasury - Internal Revenue Service  
**Form 13614-C** (October 2025)  
**Intake/Interview and Quality Review Sheet**  
 OMB Number 1545-1964

**You will need:**

- Tax information such as Forms W-2, 1099, 1098, 1095.
- Social Security cards or ITIN letters for all persons on your tax return
- Picture ID (such as valid driver's license) for you and your spouse

**Complete pages 1-5 of this form.**

- You are responsible for the information on your return. Provide complete and accurate information.
- If you have questions, ask the IRS-certified volunteer preparer.

**Volunteers are trained to provide high quality service and uphold the highest ethical standards. To report unethical behavior to the IRS, email us at [ts.voltax@irs.gov](mailto:ts.voltax@irs.gov)**

Your first name: M.I. Last name: Your date of birth: Your job title:  
 Spouse's first name: M.I. Last name: Spouse's date of birth: Spouse's job title:  
 Mailing address: Apt # City State ZIP code  
 Your telephone number: Spouse's telephone number: Email address (optional): Did you live or work in two or more states in 2025  
 Yes  No  Yes  No

**Can anyone else claim you or your spouse on their tax return**

**Check if you or your spouse were in 2025:**

A U.S. citizen  You  Spouse  No  Spouse  No  Spouse  No

In the U.S. on a visa  You  Spouse  No  Spouse  No  Spouse  No

A full-time student  You  Spouse  No  Spouse  No  Spouse  No

**If due a refund, how would you like your refund**

Direct deposit  Check by mail  IRS.gov Direct Pay

Split refund between accounts  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Bank account \_\_\_\_\_

Set up installment agreement  Mail payment to IRS \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to receive written communications from the IRS in a language other than English  You  Spouse  No

What language \_\_\_\_\_

Would you, or your spouse if married filing jointly, like \$3 to go to the Presidential Election Campaign Fund  You  Spouse  No

As of December 31, 2025, what was your marital status

**Never Married**  **Married** If married, were you married on the last day of the year  Yes  No

**Divorced** Did you and your spouse live apart all of the last 6 months of the year  Yes  No

Date of final decree \_\_\_\_\_  **Legally Separated but not Divorced**  **Widowed** Year of spouse's death \_\_\_\_\_

Date of separate maintenance decree \_\_\_\_\_

List the names below of everyone who lived with you last year (except your spouse) AND anyone you supported but did not live with you last year.

Name (first, last)	Date of birth (mm/dd/yyyy)	Relationship to you (child, parent, none, etc.)	Number of months lived in your home in 2025	Single or Married as of 12/31/2025 (S/M)	Resident of U.S., Canada or Mexico	Totally and permanently disabled	Issued IPPIN	To be completed by certified volunteer (Yes, No, or N/A)		Taxpayer(s) who have provided more than 50% of their own support for this person	Taxpayer(s) who have provided more than 50% of the cost of maintaining a home for this person
								Qualifying child or relative of any other person	This person provided more than 50% of their support for this person		

Catalog Number 52121E [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) (Rev. 10-2025)

This grey area is for tax preparers to fill out as part of Due Diligence. Anything grey here on forth, must be filled out by the volunteer.

**Income: Answer the following questions on the left side of this page. Check only the boxes that apply to you and/or your spouse.**

**Received money from any of the following in 2025:** (To be completed by certified volunteer) Income to be included Notes/Comments

<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Wages as a part-time or full-time employee How many jobs _____	<input type="checkbox"/> (B) W-2s # _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> (B/A) Tips	<input type="checkbox"/> (B/A) Tips (Basic when reported on W2)	
<input type="checkbox"/> (B/A) Retirement account, pension or annuity proceeds	<input type="checkbox"/> (B/A) 1099-R (Basic when taxable amount is reported) # _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Disability benefits (such as payments from insurance and worker's compensation)	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Qualified Charitable Distribution From 1099-R \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> (B) Disability benefits on 1099-R or W-2 # _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Social Security or Railroad Retirement Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> (B) SSA-1099, RRB-1099 # _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Unemployment benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> (B) 1099-G # _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Refund of state or local income tax	<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Refund \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> (B) Itemized last year <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Interest or dividends (bank account, bonds, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> (B) 1099-INT # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> (B) 1099-DIV # _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Sale of stocks, bonds or real estate Did you report a loss on last year's return <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) 1099-B (include brokerage statement) # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Capital loss carryover <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Alimony	<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Alimony \$ _____ Excluded from income <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<input type="checkbox"/> (A/M) Income from renting out your house or a room in your house if yes, did you use the dwelling unit as a personal residence and rent it for fewer than 15 days <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> (A/M) Rental income (Advanced when the dwelling is a personal residence and rented for fewer than 15 days) \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Rental expense \$ _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Income from renting personal property such as a vehicle		
<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Gambling winnings, including lottery	<input type="checkbox"/> (B) W-2G or other gambling winnings (list losses below if taxpayer can itemize deductions) # _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Payments for contract or self-employment work Did you report a loss on last year's return <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Schedule C # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> 1099-MISC # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> 1099-NEC # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> 1099-K # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other income reported elsewhere \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule C expenses \$ _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other money received during the year? (example: cash payments, jury duty, awards, digital assets, royalties, union strike benefits)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other income (see Pub 4012 for guidance on other income, i.e., scope of service chart) \$ _____	

The right side of the page 2 and page 3 must be filled out by the volunteer tax preparer. If clients brought a form, they must verify the # of forms with the left side that the client filled out. If no forms, write 'N/A' for all lines.



**Expenses and Tax Related Events: Answer the questions on the left side of this page. Check only the boxes that apply to you and/or your spouse.**

	<b>(To be completed by certified volunteer) Standard or Itemized Deductions</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Mortgage Interest <input type="checkbox"/> (A) Taxes: state, local, real estate, sales, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> (A) Medical, dental, prescription expenses <input type="checkbox"/> (A) Charitable contributions	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) 1098 # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> (B) Standard deduction <input type="checkbox"/> (A) Itemized deduction	
<b>Paid any of these expenses in 2025?</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Student loan interest	<input type="checkbox"/> (B) 1098-E	
<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Child and dependent care	<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Child and dependent care credit	
<input type="checkbox"/> (B/A) Contributions to a retirement account	<input type="checkbox"/> (B/A) IRA (Basic if a Roth IRA or 401K)	
<input type="checkbox"/> (B) School supplies by a teacher, teacher's aide or other educator	<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Educator expenses deduction \$ _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Alimony payments (do not include child support)	<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Alimony payments with spouse's SSN \$ _____ Adjustment to income <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Did any of the following happen during 2025?</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> (B) You or someone in your family took educational classes (technical school, college, job related, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Taxable scholarship income	
<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Sell a home	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Sale of home (1099-S)	
<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Have a health savings account (HSA)	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) HSA contributions <input type="checkbox"/> (A) HSA distributions	
<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Purchase health insurance through the Marketplace (Exchange)	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) 1095-A	
<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Purchase and install energy-efficient home items (example: windows, furnace, insulation, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Energy efficient home improvement credit (Form 5695, Part II only)	
<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Other (example: purchased a new vehicle, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> VIN # _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Have credit card, mortgage, or other debt cancelled/forgiven by a lender	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) 1099-C	
<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Have a loss related to a declared Federal disaster area	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) 1099-A	
<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Have a tax credit disallowed (example: earned income credit, child tax credit, or American opportunity credit)	<input type="checkbox"/> Disaster relief impacts return <input type="checkbox"/> (B) EITC, CTC, AOTC or HOH disallowed in a previous year	
<input type="checkbox"/> Receive any letter or bill from the IRS	Year disallowed Reason <input type="checkbox"/> Eligible for Low Income Taxpayer Clinic referral	
<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Make estimated tax payments or apply last year's refund to 2025 taxes	<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Estimated tax payments	
<input type="checkbox"/> Brought last year's return	<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Last year's refund applied to this year	
<input type="checkbox"/> Brought last year's return	<input type="checkbox"/> Last year's return available	



**Optional Information**

The following information is for statistical purposes only. Your responses to these questions are not a part of your tax return and are not transmitted to the IRS with your tax return. You are not required to answer these questions.

- 1. Would you say you can carry on a conversation in English  Very well  Well  Not well  Not at all  Prefer not to answer
- 2. Would you say you can read a newspaper in English  Very well  Well  Not well  Not at all  Prefer not to answer
- 3. Do you or any member of your household have a disability  Yes  No  Prefer not to answer
- 4. Are you or your spouse a Veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces  Yes  No  Prefer not to answer

5. What is your race and/or ethnicity? Select all that apply
- American Indian or Alaska Native** (for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation of Montana, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, Aztec, Maya, etc.)
  - Asian** (for example, Chinese, Asian Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.)
  - Black or African American** (for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.)
  - Hispanic or Latino** (for example, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Salvadoran, Cuban, Dominican, Guatemalan, etc.)
  - Middle Eastern or North African** (for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Iraqi, Israeli, etc.)
  - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander** (for example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.)
  - White** (for example, English, German, Irish, Italian, Polish, Scottish, etc.)
6. What is your spouse's race and/or ethnicity? Select all that apply
- American Indian or Alaska Native** (for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation of Montana, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, Aztec, Maya, etc.)
  - Asian** (for example, Chinese, Asian Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.)
  - Black or African American** (for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.)
  - Hispanic or Latino** (for example, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Salvadoran, Cuban, Dominican, Guatemalan, etc.)
  - Middle Eastern or North African** (for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Iraqi, Israeli, etc.)
  - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander** (for example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.)
  - White** (for example, English, German, Irish, Italian, Polish, Scottish, etc.)

**Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice**

We are asking for this information so you may participate in the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program which provides IRS-certified volunteer income tax preparers to assist with basic income tax return preparation for qualified individuals. The IRS authority to collect this information is 5 U.S.C. section 301 and 26 U.S.C. section 7801. The information you provide may be disclosed to others who coordinate VITA/TCE staffing, outreach, and other VITA/TCE related activities. The IRS may only disclose your return and return information as provided by 26 U.S.C. section 6103. All other records may be disclosed only for purposes the IRS deems are compatible with the purpose for which IRS collected the records, and consistent with any routine use disclosures described in the System of Record Notice (SORN) Treasury/IRS 24.030, Customer Account Data Engine (CADE) Individual Master File (IMF). You may view Treasury/IRS SORNs on the Treasury SORN website at Treasury.gov/System of Records Notices (SORNs). Providing this information is voluntary however, if you do not provide the requested information the IRS volunteers may not be able to assist you with preparing and filing your tax return.

The Paperwork Reduction Act requires that the IRS display an OMB control number on all public information requests. The OMB Control Number for this study is 1545-1964. Also, if you have any comments regarding the time estimates associated with this study or suggestion on making this process simpler, write to the Internal Revenue Service, Tax Products Coordinating Committee, SE:TS:CAR:MP:T:T:SP, 1111 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20224.



# Form 1040

## What It Is and How to Fill It Out

The IRS 1040 tax form is the most basic annual federal income tax form, and almost everyone who earns an income in the US will need to fill one out. Understanding how to properly complete your Form 1040 simplifies the process and reduces the risk of a tax audit.

- you use each year to report your income, claim deductions and credits, and determine your tax liability for federal tax purposes.
- includes a number of schedules for reporting additional income and claiming tax deductions and credits.
- There are also variations for senior citizens (Form 1040-SR), nonresident aliens (Form 1040-NR), and filers who need to amend their federal tax return form (Form 1040-X).

## Who needs to file?

If you're **self-employed** and make **more than \$400** from your business annually, you need to file Form 1040. However, if you're an employee or earn passive income (dividends, interest, rental income), the gross income or threshold for filing is larger. Single filers under the age of 65 are required to file Form 1040 if they make more than \$15,000 in gross annual income.

**Form 1040-SR** is for people aged 65 and older.

**Form 1040-NR** a nonresident alien is an individual who is not a U.S. citizen and has not met the requirements for a resident alien, and engaged in any a trade or business in the U.S. during the year, even if your business earned no income, received income or is self-employed.

**Form 1040-ES** is used for reporting and paying estimated tax. If you earn income that is not subject to federal income tax withholding, such as rental income or self-employment income.

**Form 1040-V** is filed for when money is owed on your taxes and are paying by check or money order, you'll need to fill and send in Form 1040-V when you pay.

**Form 1040-X** lets you make amendments if you previously filed a Form 1040. If you need to adjust your income, claim deductions and credits, or correct other errors on your individual income tax return.

For the year Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2024, or other tax year beginning \_\_\_\_\_, 2024, ending \_\_\_\_\_, 2024, See separate instructions.

Your first name and middle initial Last name Your social security number

If joint return, spouse's first name and middle initial Last name Spouse's social security number

Home address (number and street). If you have a P.O. box, see instructions. Apt. no. Presidential Election Campaign

City, town, or post office. If you have a foreign address, also complete spaces below. State ZIP code Check here if you, or your spouse if filing jointly, want \$3 to go to this fund. Checking a box below will not change your tax or refund.

Foreign country name Foreign province/state/county Foreign postal code [ ] You [ ] Spouse

Filing Status [ ] Single [ ] Head of household (HOH) [ ] Married filing jointly (even if only one had income) [ ] Married filing separately (MFS) [ ] Qualifying surviving spouse (QSS) Check only one box. If you checked the MFS box, enter the name of your spouse. If you checked the HOH or QSS box, enter the child's name if the qualifying person is a child but not your dependent: [ ] If treating a nonresident alien or dual-status alien spouse as a U.S. resident for the entire tax year, check the box and enter their name (see instructions and attach statement if required):

Digital Assets At any time during 2024, did you: (a) receive (as a reward, award, or payment for property or services); or (b) sell, exchange, or otherwise dispose of a digital asset (or a financial interest in a digital asset)? (See instructions.) [ ] Yes [ ] No

Standard Deduction Someone can claim: [ ] You as a dependent [ ] Your spouse as a dependent [ ] Spouse itemizes on a separate return or you were a dual-status alien

Age/Blindness You: [ ] Were born before January 2, 1960 [ ] Are blind Spouse: [ ] Was born before January 2, 1960 [ ] Is blind

Table with 6 columns: (1) First name, Last name, (2) Social security number, (3) Relationship to you, (4) Check the box if qualifies for (see instructions): Child tax credit, Credit for other dependents. Includes instructions for dependents.

Income section table with rows 1a through 1z. Includes instructions to attach Form(s) W-2 here and other tax forms.

Table with rows 2a through 6b. Includes instructions to attach Sch. B if required.

Table with rows 7 through 15. Includes instructions for Standard Deduction for various filing statuses.



<b>Tax and Credits</b>	16	Tax (see instructions). Check if any from Form(s): 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 8814 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 4972 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	16
	17	Amount from Schedule 2, line 3	17
	18	Add lines 16 and 17	18
	19	Child tax credit or credit for other dependents from Schedule 8812	19
	20	Amount from Schedule 3, line 8	20
	21	Add lines 19 and 20	21
	22	Subtract line 21 from line 18. If zero or less, enter -0-	22
	23	Other taxes, including self-employment tax, from Schedule 2, line 21	23
24	Add lines 22 and 23. This is your <b>total tax</b>	24	

<b>Payments</b>	25	Federal income tax withheld from:		
	a	Form(s) W-2	25a	
	b	Form(s) 1099	25b	
	c	Other forms (see instructions)	25c	
	d	Add lines 25a through 25c	25d	
	26	2024 estimated tax payments and amount applied from 2023 return	26	
	27	Earned income credit (EIC)	27	
	28	Additional child tax credit from Schedule 8812	28	
	29	American opportunity credit from Form 8863, line 8	29	
	30	Reserved for future use	30	
31	Amount from Schedule 3, line 15	31		
32	Add lines 27, 28, 29, and 31. These are your <b>total other payments and refundable credits</b>	32		
33	Add lines 25d, 26, and 32. These are your <b>total payments</b>	33		

If you have a qualifying child, attach Sch. EIC.

<b>Refund</b>	34	If line 33 is more than line 24, subtract line 24 from line 33. This is the amount you <b>overpaid</b>	34
	35a	Amount of line 34 you want <b>refunded to you</b> . If Form 8888 is attached, check here <input type="checkbox"/>	35a
	b	Routing number	c Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Checking <input type="checkbox"/> Savings
	d	Account number	
36	Amount of line 34 you want <b>applied to your 2025 estimated tax</b>	36	

<b>Amount You Owe</b>	37	Subtract line 33 from line 24. This is the <b>amount you owe</b> . For details on how to pay, go to <a href="http://www.irs.gov/Payments">www.irs.gov/Payments</a> or see instructions	37
	38	Estimated tax penalty (see instructions)	38

**Third Party Designee** Do you want to allow another person to discuss this return with the IRS? See instructions  **Yes**. Complete below.  **No**

Designee's name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone no. \_\_\_\_\_ Personal identification number (PIN) \_\_\_\_\_

**Sign Here** Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this return and accompanying schedules and statements, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, they are true, correct, and complete. Declaration of preparer (other than taxpayer) is based on all information of which preparer has any knowledge.

Your signature	Date	Your occupation	If the IRS sent you an Identity Protection PIN, enter it here (see inst.)
Spouse's signature. If a joint return, <b>both</b> must sign.	Date	Spouse's occupation	If the IRS sent your spouse an Identity Protection PIN, enter it here (see inst.)
Phone no.	Email address		

**Paid Preparer Use Only**

Preparer's name	Preparer's signature	Date	PTIN	Check if: <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed
Firm's name	Firm's address			Phone no.
Firm's address				Firm's EIN

Go to [www.irs.gov/Form1040](http://www.irs.gov/Form1040) for instructions and the latest information.

## What It Is and How to Fill It Out

There are a number of additional tax schedules you can use to report business income, declare additional income, and claim further deductions and credits.

**Schedule 1:** If you have additional income and adjustments to income that you did not report on the first page of Form 1040, you'll use Schedule 1 to declare these. These can include things like alimony, business income, and educator expenses.

**Schedule 2:** If you pay additional taxes on some parts of your income, you'll use Schedule 2 to declare this. Schedule 2 is broken into 2 parts: the first is for alternative minimum tax and premium tax credits on health insurance that you've purchased through the marketplace. The second part of Schedule 2 is for other taxes like self-employment tax, tax on IRAs, additional taxes on Medicare, excess social security taxes, and investment income tax.

**Schedule 3:** is where you'll report any credits and payments for things like child tax credit, dependent care expenses, general business credit, overpayment of past taxes, and residential energy credits. Schedule 3 is split into two parts: the first is for refundable credits, and the second is for non-refundable credits.

**Schedule A:** is used to report itemized deductions. This includes everything from medical expenses to mortgage interest and charitable donations.

**Schedule B:** If you've made more than \$1,500 in income from interest and dividends. Any interest or dividend income under that amount only needs to be entered on the standard Form 1040, on lines 2 and 3.

**Schedule C:** If you're a contractor, freelancer, or someone else who owns a business, you'll use Schedule C to report your profits or losses from that business.

**Schedule D:** is for any capital gains and losses you've made from your investments.

**Schedule SE:** Any self-employed people, independent contractors, or business owners who made more than \$400 from their business.

**Form 8812:** Use form 8812 to claim the Child Tax Credit or Credit for Other Dependents.

## Questions people usually ask:

### **Is a 1040 the same as a W-2?**

No, Form 1040 and W-2 are 2 separate federal tax forms. Your employer will send you a W-2 (Wage and Tax Statement) that details your income and withholdings, which you will use when you fill out Form 1040. A copy is also sent to the IRS. The 1040 federal income tax form is the form you send to the IRS when you file your taxes.

### **When should you use a 1040?**

You should use Form 1040 when you file your annual income taxes. You'll use it to report your income, any deductions and credits you're claiming, and your total tax liability.

### **What is the difference between W-2, W-4, and 1040?**

A W-2 is a form your employer sends you that details your income and tax withholdings; a W-4 is a form you fill out for your employer explaining your withholding status, and 1040 is the form that you send to the IRS when you file your annual income taxes.

### **Is 1040 the same as 1099?**

No, Form 1040 and Form 1099 are two different federal tax forms. Form 1040 is a form that you fill out and send to the IRS reporting your income, deductions, credits, and tax due. Form 1099 is used to report non-employee income (like independent contractors) to you and to the IRS; you'll use that information when you fill out Form 1040.

### **Is 1040 proof of income?**

You can use Form 1040 as proof of your last year's income if you need to show it for a mortgage loan, rental, financial aid, etc.

# 4012 Volunteer Resource Guide

## Who must file? (Tab A A-3)

If your filing status is...	AND at the end of 2025 you were... <sup>1</sup>	THEN file a return if your gross income was at least... <sup>2</sup>
Single	under 65	\$15,000
	65 or older	\$17,000
Married filing jointly <sup>3</sup>	under 65 (both spouses)	\$30,000
	65 or older (one spouse)	\$31,600
	65 or older (both spouses)	\$33,200
Married filing separately (see the Instructions for Form 1040)	any age	\$5
Head of household (see the Instructions for Form 1040)	under 65	\$22,500
	65 or older	\$24,500
Qualifying Surviving Spouse (see the Instructions for Form 1040)	under 65	\$30,000
	65 or older	\$31,600

Standard deduction, depending on your filing status, lowers your taxable income.

DIY: Practice	Single	MF	HoH
Standard Deduction:	\$15,000		
Prior Taxable Income:	\$50,000	\$75,900	\$62,000
Actual Taxable Income:	\$35,000		

# Standard Deduction Chart for People Born Before January 2, 1961 or Were Blind

Additional standard deduction per box? \_\_\_\_\_

Standard Deduction Chart for People Who Were Born Before January 2, 1961, or Were Blind		
<p><b>Don't</b> use this chart if someone can claim you, or your spouse if filing jointly, as a dependent. Instead, use the worksheet below.</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> You were born before January 2, 1961.      <input type="checkbox"/> You are blind.  <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse was born before January 2, 1961.      <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse is blind.                 </p>		
Enter the total number of boxes checked .....		▶ <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
IF your filing status is ...	AND the number in the box above is ...	THEN your standard deduction is ...
Single	1	\$ 17,000
	2	19,000
Married filing jointly	1	\$ 31,600
	2	33,200
	3	34,800
	4	36,400
Qualifying surviving spouse	1	\$ 31,600
	2	33,200
Married filing separately*	1	\$ 16,600
	2	18,200
	3	19,800
	4	21,400
Head of household	1	\$ 24,500
	2	26,500
<p>* You can check the boxes for spouse if your filing status is married filing separately and your spouse had no income, isn't filing a return, and can't be claimed as a dependent on another person's return.</p>		

**Blind** – A taxpayer is considered blind if either totally blind as of December 31 of the tax year or they have a statement certified by their eye doctor (ophthalmologist or optometrist) that:

- They cannot see better than 20/200 in their better eye with glasses or contact lenses, or
- Their field of vision is 20 degrees or less

DIY: Practice	Single (Over 65)	MF (Both Over 65 and 1 blind)	HoH (Over 65 and partially blind)
<b>Standard Deduction:</b>	\$17,000		
<b>Prior Taxable Income:</b>	\$50,000	\$75,900	\$62,000
<b>Actual Taxable Income:</b>	\$38,000		

## Who must file? (Tab A A-3)

Single Dependents	
Either 65 or over or blind	<p>You must file a return if any of the following apply.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Your unearned income was over \$3,350 (\$5,350 if 65 or older and blind).</li> <li>2. Your earned income was over \$17,000 (\$19,000 if 65 or older and blind).</li> <li>3. Your gross income was more than the larger of —               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. \$3,350 (\$5,350 if 65 or older and blind) or</li> <li>b. Your earned income (up to \$14,550) plus \$2,450 (\$4,450 if 65 or older and blind)..</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
Under 65 and not blind	<p>You must file a return if any of the following apply.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Your unearned income was over \$1,350.</li> <li>2. Your earned income was over \$15,000.</li> <li>3. Your gross income was more than the larger of —               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. \$1,350, or</li> <li>b. Your earned income (up to \$14,550) plus \$450.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

In this chart, unearned income includes taxable interest, ordinary dividends, and capital gain distributions. It also includes unemployment compensation, taxable Social Security benefits, pensions, annuities, and distributions of unearned income from a trust. Earned income includes salaries, wages, tips, professional fees, and taxable scholarship and fellowship grants. Gross income is the total of your unearned and earned income.

## Other Situations When You Must File

**You must file a return if any of the conditions below apply for 2025.**

1. You owe any special taxes, including any of the following.
  - a. Alternative minimum tax (Out of Scope).
  - b. Additional tax on a qualified plan, including an individual retirement arrangement (IRA), or other tax favored account. But if you are filing a return only because you owe this tax, you can file Form 5329 by itself.
  - c. Household employment taxes. But if you are filing a return only because you owe this tax, you can file Schedule H by itself (Out of Scope).
  - d. Social Security and Medicare tax on tips you did not report to your employer or on wages you received from an employer who did not withhold these taxes.
  - e. Write-in taxes, including uncollected Social Security and Medicare or RRTA tax on tips you reported to your employer or on group-term life insurance and additional taxes on health savings accounts. See the Instructions for Form 1040.
  - f. Recapture taxes. See the Instructions for Form 1040 (Out of Scope).
2. You (or your spouse, if filing jointly) received HSA distributions (in scope), Archer MSA distributions (Out of Scope), or Medicare Advantage MSA distributions (Out of Scope).

## Other Situations When You Must File

3. You had net earnings from self-employment of at least \$400. Net earnings are Sch C profit multiplied by 92.35%. There is no self-employment tax on Sch C profit of less than \$433.
4. You had wages of \$108.28 or more from a church or qualified church-controlled organization that is exempt from employer Social Security and Medicare taxes (Out of Scope).
5. Advance payments of the premium tax credit were made for you, your spouse, or a dependent who enrolled in coverage through the Marketplace. You or whoever enrolled you should have received Form(s) 1095-A showing the amount of the advance payments.
6. You are required to include amounts in income under section 965 or you have a net tax liability under section 965 that you are paying in installments under section 965(h) or deferred by making an election under 965(i) (Out of Scope).
7. You purchased a new or used clean vehicle from a registered dealer and reduced the amount you paid at the time of sale by transferring the credit to the dealer. See Form 8936 and Schedule A (Form 8936). (Out of Scope).

## Who should file? (Tab A A-6)

**Even if a taxpayer is not required to file a federal income tax return, they should file if any of the following situations below apply.**

1. You had income tax withheld from your pay, pension, Social Security or other income.
2. You made estimated tax payments for the year or had any of your overpayment from last year's tax return applied to this year's taxes.
3. You qualify for the earned income credit. See Publication 596, Earned Income Credit (EIC), for more information.
4. You qualify for the additional child tax credit. See the Instructions for Schedule 8812, Credits for Qualifying Children and Other Dependents.
5. You qualify for a refundable American opportunity credit.
6. You qualify for the premium tax credit.
7. You receive a 1099-B, Proceeds From Broker and Barter Exchange Transactions, and the gross proceeds plus other income exceeds the filing limits in Chart A.
8. You receive a 1099-DA, Digital Asset Proceeds From Broker Transactions, and the gross proceeds plus other income exceeds the filing limits in Chart A (Out of Scope).
9. You receive Form 1099-S, Proceeds From Real Estate Transactions.
10. You are required to file a state return.
11. You qualify for the refundable credit for prior year minimum tax. See Form 8801, Credit for Prior Year Minimum Tax – Individuals, Estates, and Trusts (Out of Scope).
12. You qualify to file Form 4136, Credit for Federal Tax Paid on Fuels (Out of Scope).

## Filing Status (Tab B B-13)

It impacts the calculation of income tax, affects the amount of the standard deduction, and determines allowance or limitation of certain credits and deductions. The five filing statuses are: single, married filing jointly, married filing separately, head of household, and qualifying surviving spouse.

### Single Filing Status

If on the last day of the year, you are unmarried or legally separated from your spouse under a divorce or separate maintenance decree and you do not qualify for another filing status.

### Married Filing Jointly Filing Status

You are married and both you and your spouse agree to file a joint return. (On a joint return, you report your combined income and deduct your combined allowable expenses.)

### Married Filing Separately Filing Status

You must be married. This method may benefit you if you want to be responsible only for your own tax or if this method results in less tax than a joint return. If you and your spouse do not agree to file a joint return, you may have to use this filing status.

### Head of Household Filing Status

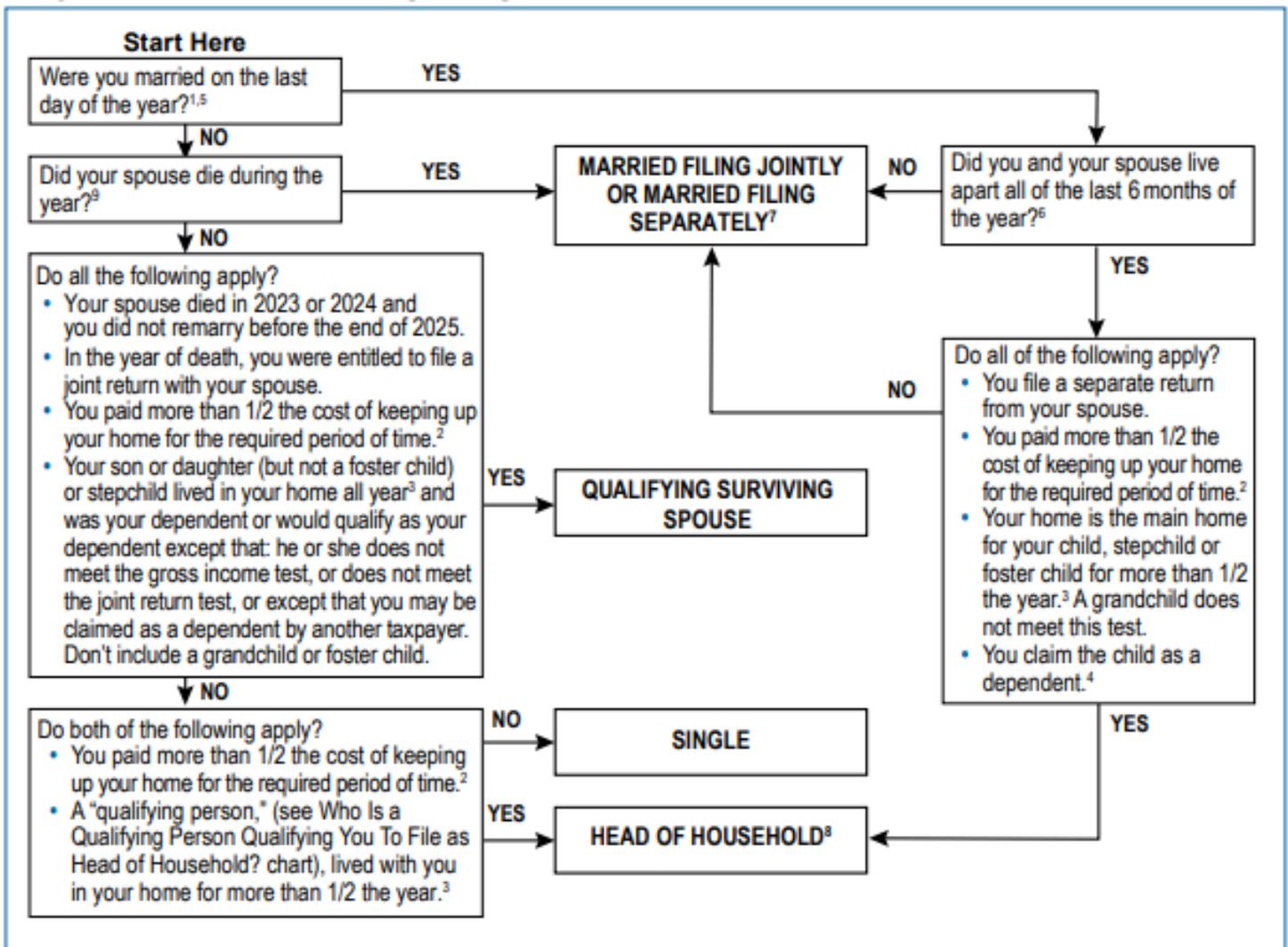
You must meet the following requirements: 1. You are unmarried or considered unmarried on the last day of the year. 2. You paid more than half the cost of keeping up a home for the year. 3. A qualifying person lived with you in the home for more than half the year (except temporary absences, such as school). However, your dependent parent does not have to live with you.

### Qualifying Surviving Spouse Filing Status

You may be eligible to use qualifying surviving spouse as your filing status for two years following the year of death of your spouse. This filing status entitles you to use joint return tax rates and the highest standard deduction amount (if you do not itemize deductions). This status does not entitle you to file a joint return.

**Note:** Some taxpayers are eligible to use more than one filing status. Usually, the taxpayer will choose the filing status with the lowest tax rates.

## Filing Status (Tab B B-13)



## Filing Status - Quiz

- Lillian has never been married, lives alone, and has paid all the expenses of keeping up a home for herself and no one else. What is Lillian's filing status? \_\_\_\_\_
- In August of the tax year, Marta moved into an apartment she shared with her husband. They have no children or other dependents. Which filing status should Marta use? \_\_\_\_\_
- Adam's wife died this year (2025). He has not gotten married. Adam provides all the support for his two dependent children. What is Adam's filing status? \_\_\_\_\_
- Jeremy is divorced and paid 100% of the cost for keeping up his home for the year. His son lives with him, and he is the primary care giver for his son. What is his filing status? \_\_\_\_\_

## Dependents (Tab C C-3)

- You can't claim any dependents if you, or your spouse if filing jointly, could be claimed as a dependent by another taxpayer, unless that taxpayer files a return only to claim a refund of income tax withheld or estimated tax paid.
- You can't claim a married person who files a joint return as a dependent unless that joint return is only to claim a refund of income tax withheld or estimated tax paid.
- You can't claim a person as a dependent unless that person is a U.S. citizen, U.S. resident alien, U.S. national, or a resident of Canada or Mexico.<sup>1</sup>
- You can't claim a person as a dependent unless that person is your qualifying child or qualifying relative.

Tests To Be a Qualifying Child	Tests To Be a Qualifying Relative
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The child must be your child, stepchild, foster child, sibling, half sibling, stepsibling, or a descendant of any of them. An adopted child is always treated as your own child. The term "adopted child" includes a child who was lawfully placed with you for legal adoption.</li> <li>2. The child must be: (a) under age 19 at the end of the year and younger than you (or your spouse, if filing jointly), (b) under age 24 at the end of the year, a full-time student, and younger than you (or your spouse, if filing jointly), or (c) any age if permanently and totally disabled.</li> <li>3. The child must have lived with you for more than half of the year.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>4. The child must not have provided more than half of his or her own support for the year.<sup>5</sup></li> <li>5. The child isn't filing a joint return for the year (unless that joint return is filed only to claim a refund of income tax withheld or estimated tax paid).</li> <li>6. If the child meets the rules to be a qualifying child of more than one person, you must be the person entitled to claim the child as a qualifying child. See the "Qualifying Child of More Than One Person" chart.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The person can't be your qualifying child or the qualifying child of any other taxpayer. A child isn't the qualifying child of any other taxpayer if the child's parent (or any other person for whom the child is defined as a qualifying child) isn't required to file an income tax return or files an income tax return only to get a refund of income tax withheld.</li> <li>2. The person either (a) must be related to you in one of the ways listed under "Relatives who don't have to live with you" (see Table 2, step 2), or (b) must live with you all year as a member of your household<sup>2</sup> (and your relationship must not violate local law).</li> <li>3. The person's gross income for the year must be less than \$5,200.<sup>3</sup> Gross income means all income the person received in the form of money, goods, property and services, that isn't exempt from tax. Don't include Social Security benefits unless the person is married filing a separate return and lived with their spouse at any time during the tax year or if 1/2 the Social Security benefits plus their other gross income and tax exempt interest is more than \$25,000 (\$32,000 if MFJ).</li> <li>4. You must provide more than half of the person's total support for the year.<sup>4, 5</sup></li> </ol>

## Qualifying Child of More Than One Person

<b>Tiebreaker Rules</b>	
<p>If the child meets the conditions to be the qualifying child of more than one person, only one person can claim the child as a qualifying child dependent for all tax benefits associated with an exemption unless the special rule for children of divorced or separated parents applies<sup>1</sup>.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit for other dependents</li> <li>• Child Tax Credit</li> <li>• Head of Household</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earned Income Credit</li> <li>• Credit for Child and Dependent Care Expenses</li> <li>• Exclusion from income for Dependent Care Benefits</li> </ul>
<p><b>No other person can take any of the six tax benefits listed above unless he or she has a different qualifying child. To determine which person can treat the child as a qualifying child to claim these six tax benefits, the following tiebreaker rules apply. Subject to these tiebreaker rules, the taxpayer and the other person may be able to choose which person claims the child as a qualifying child.</b></p>	
<p>If only one of the persons is the child's parent, the child is treated as the qualifying child of the parent.</p>	
<p>If the parents file a joint return together and can claim the child as a qualifying child, the child is treated as the qualifying child of the parents.</p>	
<p>If the parents don't file a joint return together but both parents claim the child as a qualifying child, the IRS will treat the child as the qualifying child of the parent with whom the child lived for the longer period of time during the year. If the child lived with each parent for the same amount of time, the IRS will treat the child as the qualifying child of the parent who had the higher adjusted gross income (AGI) for the year.</p>	
<p>If no parent can claim the child as a qualifying child, the child is treated as the qualifying child of the person who had the highest AGI for the year.</p>	
<p>If a parent can claim the child as a qualifying child but no parent claims the child, the child is treated as the qualifying child of the person who had the highest AGI for the year, but only if that person's AGI is higher than the highest AGI of any of the child's parents who can claim the child.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Your daughter meets the conditions to be a qualifying child for both you and your mother. Under the rules above, you are entitled to treat your daughter as a qualifying child for all of the six tax benefits listed above for which you otherwise qualify. Your mother isn't entitled to take any of the six tax benefits listed above unless she has a different qualifying child. However, if your mother's AGI is higher than yours, you can let your mother treat your daughter as her qualifying child. If you do that, your daughter isn't your qualifying child for any of the six benefits.</p> <p>For more details and examples, see Publication 17 and Publication 501, Exemptions, Standard Deduction, and Filing Information.</p>	

## All Dependents (Tab C C-4/5)

Step	Probe/Ask the taxpayer:	Action
1	Can you or your spouse (if filing jointly) be claimed as a dependent on another taxpayer's tax return this year? <sup>5</sup>	If <b>YES</b> : If you can be claimed as a dependent by another taxpayer, you may not claim anyone else as your dependent. If <b>NO</b> : Go to Step 2.
2	Was the person married as of December 31 of the tax year?	If <b>YES</b> : Go to Step 3. If <b>NO</b> : Go to Step 4.
3	Is the person filing a joint return for this tax year? Answer <b>No</b> if the person is filing a joint return only to claim a refund of income tax withheld or estimated tax paid.	If <b>YES</b> : You can't claim this person as a dependent. If <b>NO</b> : Go to Step 4.
4	Was the person a U.S. citizen, U.S. resident alien, U.S. national, or a resident of Canada or Mexico? Answer <b>Yes</b> if you are a U.S. citizen or U.S. national and you adopted a child who lived with you as a member of your household all year.	If <b>YES</b> : Go to Step 5. If <b>NO</b> : You can't claim this person as a dependent.
5	Was the person your child, stepchild, eligible foster child, sibling, half sibling, stepsibling, or a descendant of any of them (i.e., your grandchild, niece, or nephew)? <sup>4</sup>	If <b>YES</b> : Go to Step 6. If <b>NO</b> : This person isn't your qualifying child. Go to Table 2: Qualifying Relative Dependents.
6	Was the person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• under age 19 at the end of the year and younger than you (<i>or your spouse, if filing jointly</i>) or</li> <li>• under age 24 at the end of the year, a full-time student (see definition in the glossary) and younger than you (<i>or your spouse, if filing jointly</i>) or</li> <li>• any age if permanently and totally disabled<sup>1</sup> at any time during the year?</li> </ul>	If <b>YES</b> : Go to Step 7. If <b>NO</b> : This person isn't your qualifying child. Go to Table 2: Qualifying Relative Dependents.
7	Did the person live with you as a member of your household, except for temporary absences <sup>2</sup> , for more than half the year? Answer <b>Yes</b> if the child was born or died during the year and lived with you for more than half the part of the year they were alive. A child lawfully placed with you for legal adoption or as an eligible foster child is considered to have lived with you for more than half the year if your main home was this person's main home for more than half the time since the child was adopted or placed with you in the year.	If <b>YES</b> : Go to Step 8. (Use Table 3 to see if the dependency for children of divorced or separated parents or parents who live apart applies). If <b>NO</b> : This person isn't your qualifying child. Go to Table 2: Qualifying Relative Dependents.
8	Did the person provide more than half of his or her own support <sup>3</sup> for the year?	If <b>YES</b> : You can't claim this person as a dependent. If <b>NO</b> : Go to Step 9.
9	Is the person a qualifying child of any other taxpayer?	If <b>YES</b> : Go to the chart: Qualifying Child of More Than One Person. If <b>NO</b> : You can claim this person as a qualifying child dependent.

## All dependents

<sup>1</sup> A person is permanently and totally disabled if he or she can't engage in any substantial gainful activity because of a physical or mental condition, and a doctor determines the condition has lasted or can be expected to last continuously for at least a year or can lead to death.

<sup>2</sup> A child is considered to have lived with you during periods of time when one of you, or both, are temporarily absent due to illness, education, business, vacation, military service, institutionalized care for a child who is permanently and totally disabled, or incarceration. In most cases a child of divorced or separated parents is the qualifying child of the custodial parent. See Table 3: Children of Divorced or Separated Parents or Parents Who Live Apart to see if an exception applies. There is an exception for kidnapped children. See Publication 501.

<sup>3</sup> A worksheet for determining support is included later in this tab. If a child receives Social Security benefits and uses them toward his or her own support, those benefits are considered as provided by the child. Benefits provided by the state to a needy person (welfare, food stamps, housing, SSI) are generally considered support provided by the state.

<sup>4</sup> An adopted child is treated the same as a natural child for the purposes of determining whether a person is related to you in any of these ways. For example, an adopted brother or sister is your brother or sister. An adopted child includes a child who was lawfully placed with a person for legal adoption.

<sup>5</sup> An individual is not a dependent of a person if that person is not required to file an income tax return and either does not file an income tax return or files an income tax return solely to claim a refund of estimated or withheld taxes.

## Name Controls for Individual Tax Returns (Tab B B-19)

Individual Name on SSN/ITIN Card(s)	Enter in TaxSlayer		IRS Database Primary/ Secondary Name Control
	First Name Field	Last Name Field	
John Brown	John	Brown	BROW
Walter Di Angelo	Walter	Di Angelo	DIAN
Ronald En, Sr.	Ronald	En	EN
Thomas Lea-Smith	Thomas	Lea-Smith	LEA-
Joseph Corn & Mary Smith	Joseph	Corn	CORN
	Mary	Smith	SMIT
Roger O'Neil	Roger	ONeil	ONEI
Kenneth McCarty	Kenneth	McCarty	MCCA
FNU Smith (First Name Unknown)	FNU	Smith	SMIT
Smith (No First Name)		Smith	SMIT

Individual Name on SSN/ ITIN Card	Enter in TaxSlayer		IRS Database Primary Name Control
	First Name Field	Last Name Field	
Abdullah Allar-Sid	Abdullah	Allar-Sid	ALLA
Jose Alvarado Nogales	Jose	Alvarado Nogales	ALVA
Juan de la Rosa Y Obregon	Juan	de la Rosa Y Obregon	DELA
Pedro Paz-Ayala	Pedro	Paz-Ayala	PAZ-
Donald Vander Neut	Donald	Vander Neut	VAND
Otto Von Wodtke	Otto	Von Wodtke	VONW
John Big Eagle	John	Big Eagle	BIGE
Mary Her Many Horses	Mary	Her Many Horses	HERM
Ted Smith Gonzalez	Ted	Gonzalez	GONZ
Maria Acevedo Smith	Maria	Smith	SMIT
Robert Garcia Garza Hernandez	Robert	Garza Hernandez	GARZ

1. Primary Name Control (SEQ 0050) of Form 1040 must equal the first significant characters of the primary taxpayer's last name. No leading or embedded spaces are allowed. The first left-most position must contain an alpha character. Omit punctuation marks (except hyphens), titles and suffixes within last name field.
2. Consider certain suffixes as part of the last name (i.e., Armah-Bey, Paz-Ayala, Allar-Sid). Particular attention must be given to those names that incorporate a mother's maiden name as a suffix to the last name. For example, traditional Hispanic last names include the taxpayer's father's name followed by a space and the taxpayer's mother's maiden name. A married taxpayer's last name remains the same and either simply adds on the spouse's father's name (resulting in 3 names forming the last name) or deletes the mother's maiden name and adds on the spouse's father's name (sometimes the spouse's father's name is preceded by "de").

# Quiz

1. Steve provided \$4,000 toward his mother's support during the year. His mother had nontaxable Social Security benefit payments of \$4,800, and tax-exempt interest of \$800. She used all of these for her support. **Can Steve claim his mother as a dependent?**

2. Ted is divorced and has a daughter who lived with him and his ex-spouse for an equal number of nights. Ted's adjusted gross income is \$45,000 and his ex-spouse's adjusted gross income is \$30,000. **Who can claim the daughter?**

3. Diane and her brother each provide 20% of their grandmother's support for the year. Two people who are not related to Diane's grandmother, and who do not live with her, provide the remaining 60% of her support equally. **Who is entitled to claim the grandmother as a dependent?**

- a.) Diane
- b.) Diane's brother
- c.) One of the two persons providing the remaining 60% of support
- d.) No one

4. George and Marion, both age 22, are married and will file a joint return. George's brother, Allen, lives with them. What is Allen, the brother, for tax purposes?

- a.) Dependent
- b.) Qualifying relative
- c.) Both A and B
- d.) None of the above

5. Sam and Edith are married, file a joint return, and have three children, Aaron (age 15, in high school) who lives with them, Axel (age 18, in high school) who lives with them, and Ann (age 20, a full-time student at an out-of-state college). Axel made \$5,400 at a part-time job and filed a single tax return to recover his tax withholding. Sam and Edith provided more than half of the total support for all three children. How many dependents can Sam and Edith claim when they file their joint tax return?

- a.) They can claim one dependent since Axel does not pass the gross income test, and Ann is considered to live at home while away at college.
- b.) They can claim two dependents since Axel does not pass the gross income test.
- c.) They can claim three dependents.
- d.) They can claim two dependents since Ann is over 18 years old.

## Types of Income (Tab D)

**Gross income** is the total of your unearned and earned income.

**Unearned income** includes taxable interest, ordinary dividends, and capital gain distributions. It also includes unemployment compensation, taxable social security benefits, pensions, annuities, and distributions of unearned income from a trust.

**Earned income** includes salaries, wages, tips, professional fees, and taxable scholarship and fellowship grants.

**Table A – Examples of Taxable Income**

(Examples of income to consider when determining whether a return must be filed or if a person meets the gross income test for qualifying relative)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wages, salaries, bonuses, commissions</li> <li>• Alimony (for divorce before 2019, see How/Where to Enter Income, later)</li> <li>• Annuities</li> <li>• Awards</li> <li>• Back pay</li> <li>• Breach of contract payment</li> <li>• Business income/Self-employment income</li> <li>• Cash income</li> <li>• Compensation for personal services</li> <li>• Canceled debts<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Director's fees</li> <li>• Disability benefits (employer-funded)</li> <li>• Discounts</li> <li>• Dividends</li> <li>• Employee awards</li> <li>• Employee bonuses</li> <li>• Estate and trust income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farm income</li> <li>• Fees</li> <li>• Gains from sale of property or securities</li> <li>• Gambling winnings</li> <li>• Hobby income</li> <li>• Grants to businesses, even disaster related, unless exempted by law</li> <li>• Interest</li> <li>• Interest on life insurance dividends</li> <li>• IRA distributions</li> <li>• Jury duty fees</li> <li>• Military pay (not exempt from taxation)</li> <li>• Military pension</li> <li>• Nonemployee compensation</li> <li>• Notary fees</li> <li>• Partnership, Estate and S-Corporation income (Schedule K-1s, Taxpayer's share)</li> <li>• Pensions</li> <li>• Prizes</li> <li>• Punitive damage award</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Railroad retirement—Tier I (portion may be taxable)</li> <li>• Railroad retirement—Tier II</li> <li>• Recovery of prior year deduction<sup>2</sup> (medical, property taxes, etc.)</li> <li>• Refunds of State and local income tax (if reportable)<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Rents (gross rent)<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Rewards</li> <li>• Royalties</li> <li>• Severance pay</li> <li>• Self-employment (gross income)</li> <li>• Social Security benefits (including SSDI) – portion may be taxable – (See Tab D, Income, Form SSA-1099/RRB-1099 Tier 1 Distributions)</li> <li>• Supplemental unemployment benefits</li> <li>• Taxable scholarships and grants</li> <li>• Tips and gratuities</li> <li>• Tribal per capita payments</li> <li>• Unemployment compensation</li> </ul>
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Highlighted in yellow are some of the types of income that individuals need to file. These are the most common forms we see at our sites.

## Other Income (Scholarship and Grants, jury duty)

### What is other income?

Income that does not have its own line on Form 1040 is generally reported on Form 1040, Schedule 1.

Here are some examples:

- Prizes and awards
- Gambling winnings, including lotteries and raffles
- Jury duty pay, topic covered in the Adjustments to Income lesson
- Alaska Permanent Fund dividends
- Recovery of a deduction claimed in a prior year
- Nonbusiness credit card debt cancellation- A debt includes any indebtedness for which a taxpayer is liable, or which attaches to the taxpayer's property, such as auto loans, credit card debt, medical care, professional services, mortgages, and home equity loans. Generally, if a debt for which a taxpayer is personally liable is canceled or forgiven, the taxpayer must include the canceled amount in income. There is no income from canceled debt if the cancellation or forgiveness of debt is a gift or bequest.

## Adjustments (Educator Expense)

To identify the adjustments to income that taxpayers can claim, you will need to ask the taxpayers if they had the types of expenses listed on the Adjustments to Income section of Schedule 1. Review the taxpayers' answers on their intake and interview sheet.

During the tax year did the taxpayer or spouse:

- Pay qualified educator expenses?
- Receive income from self-employment?
- Have self-employed health insurance?
- Pay a penalty for early withdrawal of savings?
- Pay alimony?
- Make contributions to a traditional IRA?
- Contribute to a health savings account?
- Pay student loan interest?
- Receive income from jury duty that was turned over to an employer?
- Have a Form W-2 Box 12 code H contribution to Sec 501(c)(18)(D) pension plan?

## Adjustments (Educator Expense)

Eligible educators can deduct up to \$300 of qualified expenses paid during the tax year. If both the taxpayer and spouse are eligible educators, they can deduct up to \$600, but neither can deduct more than their own expenses up to \$300. The deduction amount is indexed for inflation, so future maximum deduction amounts may be higher.

Both Educators		Both Educators		One Educator	
Taxpayer	\$175	Taxpayer	\$325 → \$300	Taxpayer	\$0
Spouse	\$175	Spouse	\$175	Spouse	\$300
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$350</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$500 → \$475</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$300</b>

If the taxpayer or spouse is an educator, probe a little deeper to see if they qualify for this adjustment. Ask questions such as:

- Are you or your spouse a teacher, instructor, counselor, principal, or aide in a school? (Cannot be a home school)
- What grade or grades do you teach? (Must be K-12)
- Were you employed for at least 900 hours during the school year? (Required minimum hours)

**What expenses qualify?** If the taxpayer or spouse is an eligible educator, ask about their qualified expenses. Advise taxpayers that they must have receipts for verification if they get audited.

Expenses that qualify include books, supplies, equipment (including computer equipment, software, and services), and other materials used in the classroom. The educator's own professional development expenses related to the curriculum in which the educator provides instruction are also included. Qualified expenses also include amounts paid or incurred for personal protective equipment, disinfectant, and other supplies used for the prevention of the spread of coronavirus. Qualified expenses don't include expenses for home schooling or for nonathletic supplies for courses in health or physical education.

**Example:** Gloria is a 5th and 6th grade teacher who works full-time in a year-round school. She had 1800 hours of employment during the tax year. She spent \$262 on supplies for her students. Of that amount, \$212 was for educational software. The other \$50 was for supplies for a unit she teaches sixth graders on health. Only the \$212 is a qualified expense. She can deduct \$212.

**Example:** Debbie is a part-time art teacher at an elementary school. She spent \$185 on qualified expenses for her students. Because she has only 440 hours of documented employment as an educator during the tax year, she cannot deduct her educator expenses.

## Tax Rates

# IRS Tax Brackets Tax Rate 2023

### What is the tax rate?

A tax rate refers to a percentage at which income are taxed by the IRS and sometimes state or local governments. There are different tax rates such as marginal tax rate (IRS), effective tax rate, corporate tax rate, capital gain tax rate, payroll and other tax rates.

	Single	MFJ	HOH
10%	\$0 to \$11,925	\$0 to \$23,850	\$0 to \$17,000
12%	\$11,925 to \$48,475	\$23,850 to \$96,950	\$17,000 to \$64,850
22%	\$48,475 to \$103,350	\$96,950 to \$206,700	\$64,850 to \$103,350
24%	\$103,350 to \$197,300	\$206,700 to \$394,600	\$103,350 to \$197,300
32%	\$197,300 to \$250,525	\$394,600 to \$501,050	\$197,300 to \$250,500
35%	\$250,525 to \$626,350	\$501,050 to \$751,600	\$250,500 to \$626,350
37%	\$626,350 or more	\$751,600 or more	\$626,350 or more

**Note:** The “taxable income” amounts above represent your income after deductions (for example, the standard deduction or itemized deductions).

### How does it work?

#### Example:

- **Filing Status:** Single
- **Taxable Income:** \$80,000

#### Rate:

$$\begin{aligned} 10\% \quad \$0 \text{ to } \$11,925 &= \$ 1,192.50 \\ 12\% \quad \$11,925 \text{ to } \$48,475 &= (\$48,475 - \$11,925) = \$36,550 \times 12\% = \$ 4,386 \\ 22\% \quad \$48,475 \text{ to } \$103,350 &= (\$80,000 - \$48,475) = \$31,525 \times 22\% = \$ 6,935.50 \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{Total: } 1,192.50 + 4,386.00 + 6,935.50 = 12,514.00$$

## Tax Rates

### Work it yourself.

Example:

- **Filing Status:** Head of Household
- **Taxable Income:** \$67,000

Rate:

10% \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

12% \$17,000 to \$64,850 = \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ 5,742

22% \$64,850 to \$103,350 =  $(\$67,000 - \$64,850) = \$2,150 \times 22\% = \$$  \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_ + 5,742 + \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

### Work it yourself.

Example:

- **Filing Status:** MFJ
- **Taxable Income:** \$67,000

Rate:

10% \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

12% \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

22% \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

# Credits vs Deductions



## How Credits and Deductions Work

It's important to determine your eligibility for tax deductions and tax credits before you file.

- Deductions can reduce the amount of your income before you calculate the tax you owe.
- Credits can reduce the amount of tax you owe or increase your tax refund.
- Certain credits may give you a refund even if you don't owe any tax.\*

Credit		Deduction	
Tax bill	\$3,000	Tax Bill	\$3,000
	(\$1,000)		(\$1,000)
<b>Tax bill:</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>	<b>Tax bill:</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>

**Note:** Deductions lower your taxable income. You multiply the deduction amount towards the bracket percent and subtract from your income.

	Credit	Deduction
Tax bill	\$3,000	\$3,000
	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)
<b>Tax bill:</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>



	Credit	Deduction
AGI	\$40,000	\$40,000
		(\$1,000)
<b>Taxable Income</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$39,000</b>
Tax Rate*	12%	12%
Tax	\$4,800	\$4,800
<b>Tax Bill</b>	<b>\$3,800</b>	<b>\$4,680</b>

## Types of Credits

## EITC TABLE

Family and Dependent Credits	Child Tax Credit
	Child and Dependent Care Credit
	Earned Income Tax Credit
	Education Credits (1098-T)
	Adoption Credit
	Other Dependent
Energy Credit	Form 5685, Residential Energy Credits
Homeowner Credit	First time Homebuyer
Health Care Credit	Premium Tax Credit

## Refundable vs Non-Refundable

Refundable	Non-Refundable
Increase your refund	Reduce the amount you owe
Even if no income must be reported, you may still file to receive these credits.	Once the amount owed hits zero, then the credit has been used.
ACTC, EITC	CTC

## QUICK REFERENCE

- Educator's Expense: \$ \_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_
- Child Tax Credit: \$ \_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_
- Additional Child Tax Credit \$ \_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_
- Student Loan Interest: Up to \$ \_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_
- Other Dependent: \$ \_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_
- Earned Income Credit: \$ \_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_
- American Opportunity Credit: \$ \_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_
- Standard Deductions Page \_\_\_\_\_
  - Single: \$ \_\_\_\_
  - Married Filing Jointly: \$ \_\_\_\_
  - Head of Household: \$ \_\_\_\_

United Way of Southern Cameron County

[Unitedwayrgv.org](http://Unitedwayrgv.org)

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