



## 2024 tax filing season starts as IRS begins accepting tax returns today; taxpayer help expands this year with more in-person hours, better service, improved tools

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WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service successfully opened the 2024 tax season today by accepting and processing federal individual tax returns as the agency continues focusing on expanding options to help taxpayers.

The IRS expects more than 146 million individual tax returns for 2023 to be filed this filing season, which has a deadline of April 15, 2024.

With the start of the 2024 filing season, the IRS will be extending hours of service in nearly 250 Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TACs) across the country, providing additional help to people. The IRS will also be working to continue improvements on its phone service as well as expanding online tools. The “[Where’s My Refund?](#)” tool on IRS.gov will add more details for taxpayers checking on the status of their tax refund.

Building off the success of the 2023 tax season that saw significant improvements following passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, the 2024 filing season will continue reflecting the focus on improving services to taxpayers.

“For months, IRS employees have been working hard to be ready to help taxpayers and make tax season as easy and smooth as possible,” said IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel. “We’ve taken important steps to add more improvements to help taxpayers, ranging from expanded in-person hours, better online options and improved phone service.”

The IRS reminds taxpayers the deadline to file a 2023 tax return and pay any tax owed is Monday, April 15, 2024. Taxpayers living in Maine or Massachusetts have until April 17, 2024, due to the Patriot’s Day and Emancipation Day holidays. If a taxpayer resides in a [federally declared disaster area](#), they may have additional time to file.

### Nearly 250 Taxpayer Assistance Centers expand hours; “Where’s My Refund?” updates

**Taxpayer Assistance Center hours expanded.** As part of expanded taxpayer service efforts, nearly 250 IRS TACs around the country will extend their weekly office hours to give taxpayers additional time to get the help they need during the filing season.

The extended office hours will run through Tuesday, April 16. To see if a nearby TAC is offering extended hours, taxpayers can visit [Contact your local office](#) to access the IRS.gov TAC Locator tool. The site lists services offered, including extended hours and directions to each office. Taxpayers can call 844-545-5640 to make an appointment or walk in to get help at designated TACs offering the additional time. Normally, TACs are open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and operate by appointment.

**Special Saturday hours available.** In addition to extended hours during the work week, the IRS will again offer special Saturday hours at many TACs across the country February through May. On these special Saturdays, taxpayers can walk in to receive all services routinely provided at participating offices, except for cash payments.

These extra hours are in addition to the IRS [opening or reopening](#) 50 Taxpayer Assistance Centers that have occurred since Inflation Reduction Act funding became available in 2022.

**“Where’s My Refund?” expanded.** Taxpayers will also see important new updates to the “Where’s My Refund?” tool on IRS.gov. These ongoing updates will allow taxpayers to see more detailed refund status messages in plain language, and they will also ensure Where’s My Refund? works seamlessly on mobile devices. Taxpayers often see a generic message stating that their returns are still being processed and to check back later. With the new and improved Where’s My Refund?, taxpayers will see clearer and more detailed updates, including whether the IRS needs them to respond to a letter requesting additional information. The new updates will reduce the need for taxpayers to call the IRS for answers to these basic questions. The IRS plans to continue expanding the information available on Where’s My Refund? later this year.

Taxpayers will also see other improvements this tax season, including:

- **Phone service.** Increased help available on the [toll-free line](#) and an expanded customer call back feature designed to significantly reduce wait times.
- **Paperless processing.** Enhanced paperless processing that will enable taxpayers to submit all correspondence, non-tax forms, and responses to notices digitally and will be able to e-File nine additional tax forms with 11 more planned. Achieving this milestone will enable up to 125 million paper documents to be submitted digitally per year.
- **Online Account.** An enhanced IRS [Individual Online Account](#) that includes chat, the option to schedule and cancel future payments, revise payment plans and validate and save bank accounts. Individuals with a Social Security number or an Individual Taxpayer Identification number can log-in or sign-up for an IRS Individual Online Account to securely access information about their federal tax account, view balance and payment options, view and approve authorizations from their tax professional, view digital copies of select IRS notices and get information on their most recently filed return that includes their Adjusted Gross Income.

## Get free help preparing and filing taxes electronically

Taxpayers can visit IRS.gov 24 hours a day to [get answers](#) to tax questions. IRS.gov is the quickest and easiest option to [get help](#). The [Interactive Tax Assistant \(ITA\)](#) is a tool that provides answers to several tax law questions specific to individual circumstances. Based on input, it can determine a taxpayer’s filing status, if a person should file a tax return, if someone can be claimed as a dependent, if a type of income is taxable, if a filer is eligible to claim a credit or if an expense can be deducted.

The IRS encourages people to file their tax returns [electronically](#) and choose [direct deposit](#) for faster refunds. Filing electronically reduces tax return errors as the tax software does the calculations, flags common errors and prompts taxpayers for missing information.

The IRS offers free online and in-person tax preparation options for qualifying taxpayers through the [IRS Free File](#) program and the [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance](#) and [Tax Counseling for the Elderly](#) programs.

Taxpayers with income of \$79,000 or less last year – and that’s most taxpayers – can use IRS Free File Guided Tax Software now through Oct 15. IRS Free File Fillable forms, a part of this program, is available at no cost to any income level and provides electronic forms that people fill out and e-file themselves, also at no cost.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to people who generally make \$64,000 or less, persons with disabilities and taxpayers whose preferred language is not English. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals.



In addition to VITA, the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program offers free tax help for all taxpayers, particularly those who are 60 and older, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors.

[MilTax](#), a Department of Defense program, generally offers free return preparation and electronic filing software for federal income tax returns and up to three state income tax returns for all military members, and some veterans, with no income limit.

Another option is the Direct File pilot program. This program gives eligible taxpayers a new choice to file their 2023 federal tax returns online, for free, directly with the IRS. It will be rolled out in phases and is expected to be widely available in mid-March. Find more about Direct File pilot eligibility, scope and the 12 participating states on [Direct File](#).

## Sign and validate electronically filed tax returns

The IRS reminds taxpayers that they should keep copies of their prior-year tax returns for at least three years. Taxpayers who are using the same tax software they used last year will not need to enter prior-year information to electronically sign their 2023 tax return.

Taxpayers who are using a tax software product for the first time will need their adjusted gross income from their 2022 tax return to file electronically. Review these [steps](#) to validate and sign an electronically filed return.

## Use IRS.gov to find a reputable tax professional

The IRS also reminds taxpayers that a trusted tax professional can prepare their tax return and provide helpful information and advice. People can use the [IRS Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers with Credentials and Select Qualifications](#) to find a preparer who is skilled in tax preparation and accurately files income tax returns.

Most tax return preparers provide outstanding and professional tax service. However, choosing the wrong tax return preparer hurts taxpayers financially every year. Be sure to check [tips for choosing a tax preparer](#) and how to [avoid unethical "ghost" return preparers](#).

## Questions about refunds? EITC, ACTC available for many by Feb. 27

Although the IRS issues most refunds in less than 21 days, the IRS cautions taxpayers not to rely on receiving a refund by a certain date, especially when making major purchases or paying bills. Some returns may require additional review and may take longer. The easiest way to check a refund's status is by using [Where's My Refund?](#) on IRS.gov or the [IRS2Go](#) app.

Most Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC) related refunds should be available in bank accounts or on debit cards by Feb. 27 if taxpayers chose direct deposit and there are no other issues with their tax return. Taxpayers can check [Where's My Refund?](#) for their personalized refund date. Where's My Refund? will be updated with projected deposit dates for most early EITC and ACTC refund filers by Feb. 17.

## Know the signs of identity theft

Tax-related identity theft occurs when someone uses stolen personal information, including Social Security numbers, to file a tax return claiming a fraudulent refund. If a person suspects they are a victim of identity theft, they should continue to pay their taxes and file their tax return, even if they must file a paper return. Visit [Identity Theft Central](#) to find out more.



# News Release

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