

# Tax Preparation Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

## When do I file?

- Calendar Year Filers (Most Common)
- File Before or on April 15th\*
- Fiscal Year Filers
- File on: The 4th month after your fiscal year ends, day 15.\*

\*If your due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the due date is delayed until the next business day. Your return is considered filed on time if the envelope is properly addressed, postmarked, and deposited in the mail by the due date.

## What if I need an extension?

- If you can't file by the due date of your return, you should request an extension of time to file. To receive an automatic 6-month extension of time to file your return, you must file [Form 4868, Application for Automatic Extension of Time To File U.S. Individual Income Tax Return](#) by the due date of your return. An extension of time to file is not an extension of time to pay. You may be subject to a late payment penalty on any tax not paid by the original due date of your return.

## Members of the Military

- [Special rules](#) may apply if you served or are serving in the Armed Forces in a combat zone or a contingency operation, or become hospitalized resulting from an injury received while serving in such an area or operation. You generally have at least 180 days after you leave the designated combat zone/contingency operation to file and pay taxes. If the Service determines you to be affected by a presidentially declared disaster or a terroristic or military action, you may have up to one year after the due date of your return to file and pay taxes, depending on the deadline specified by the Service.

## Where can I file my Federal and State Income Tax return online?

- [Free File](#) Prepare and file your **federal** income tax return for free.
- [MyFreeTaxes.com](#) Services through VITA, file your **federal** income tax return for free. Helpline 886-698-9435. There is an income cap.

- [Free Tax Return Preparation Volunteers on the IRS site](#) and utilize the VITA Site Locator tool
- Prepare and file your [CALIFORNIA STATE](#) return for free through FTB
- Prepare and file your [NEW YORK STATE](#) return for free. There is an income cap.
- Prepare and file your [ILLINOIS STATE](#) return.
- [COVID](#) Tax Tips from the IRS steps to filing on line
- [File during a Pandemic](#)- online steps to speed refunds during pandemic

## Is my Unemployment /EDD taxable?

- Yes. The following payments must be reported on your federal tax return, but they are exempt from California State Income Tax: You will receive a 1099G form in the mail to include in your filing.
  - Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits including Federal Extensions (FED-ED), Pandemic Additional Compensation (PAC), Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), and Lost Wages Assistance (LWA)
  - Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits
  - Disability Insurance (DI) benefits received as a substitute for UI benefits
  - Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) benefits
- Paid Family Leave (PFL) benefits
- [IRS Unemployment Compensation Information Page](#)- How to pay taxes for unemployment compensation.
- [Identity theft involving unemployment benefits](#) – Watch for fraud around unemployment claims.
- [IRS Tax Tips](#) – Avoid tax scams.

## Are charitable donations like my Actor's Fund grant taxable?

- No. Financial assistance grants from The Actors Fund are considered non-taxable grants/gifts and the IRS does not require us to provide a Form 1099.

## What other tax credits should I know about?

- **Qualifying Performing Artist (QPA)**
  - You performed services in the **performing arts** as an employee for at least two employers during the **tax** year. You received from at least two of those employers' wages of \$200 or more per employer. And you DID NOT make more than \$16,000 total income.
    - Here is an article to what a QPA is:  
<https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/qualified-performing-artist-57483/>

- **Earned Income Tax Credit** (from IRS.GOV)
  - Earned income includes all the taxable income and wages you get from working for someone else, yourself or from a business or farm you own. To check if you qualify click [here](#).
  - Earned income **does not** include:
    - Pay you got for work when you were an inmate in a penal institution
    - Interest and dividends
    - Pensions or annuities
    - Social Security
    - Unemployment benefits
    - Alimony
    - Child support

## What do I need to know about new Tax Reform Laws?

- [Tax Reform Information](#)
  - Business deductions for industry professionals Since 2018 business deductions for w2 income are no longer allowed. You can still use your business deductions for w2 expenses for the states of California and New York. If you have cash, 1099 NEC (formally 1099 MISC) income you can use expenses on the Schedule C.
- [Standard deduction or Itemize](#) - Choosing between standard and itemized deductions
- [Actors VITA site business deductions](#) tracker

## What do I do if I cannot pay my taxes?

- ["What Ifs" for Struggling Taxpayers](#)
- [Online Payment Agreements](#): Apply for a payment plan to pay your balance over time.
- [Tax Advocate Office](#) Get help, understand your rights.

## Online Tax Help

- IRS online resources to help taxpayers.
  - [Where's My Refund?](#): An online tool that will track your tax refund.
  - [IRS2Go mobile app](#): Check your refund status, make a payment, find free tax preparation assistance, sign up for helpful tax tips, and more.
  - [What do I do if I am missing documents?](#)
  - [Online Account](#): View your tax balance and payment history.
  - [Disaster Resources through the IRS](#)
  - [Tax Scams and Consumer Alerts](#)
  - [Choosing a Reputable Tax Preparer](#)