

Sample article for organizations to use to reach customers (464 word count)

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What to do if you haven't filed your tax return

If you haven't filed a tax return in a few years, the IRS may seem like the last place you want to go to for help. But, we want to help you get back on track. You may be entitled to tax credits that result in us owing you a tax refund. If we do owe you a refund, you only have three years from the date your return was due to file and claim it. You don't have to worry about penalties for not filing if you're entitled to a refund, because those penalties only apply if you owe taxes. Also, even if you do owe taxes, we have programs that make paying easier than you may think.

If you are not sure whether you are required to file a return, check [Do I Need to File a Tax Return](#) or refer to [Publication 17](#), Your Federal Income Tax for Individuals. Both of these resources are available online at [IRS.gov](#). There is no penalty for failure to file if you are due a refund. But, if you wait to file a return or otherwise claim a refund, you risk losing your refund altogether. You must file an original return within three years of its due date to claim your refund in most instances.

If you owe taxes and have not filed a timely return, you may be subject to the failure to file penalty, unless you can show reasonable cause for failing to file timely. If you did not pay your tax in full by the due date of the return, you may also be subject to the failure to pay penalty, unless you have reasonable cause for your failure to pay timely, or the IRS has approved your [Application for Extension of Time for Payment of Tax Due to Undue Hardship](#). Interest is charged on taxes and penalties not paid by the due date, even if you have an extension of time to file.

If you are required to file a return, but you cannot pay all of the tax due on your return, we may be able to help you establish a payment agreement. Go to the [Make a Payment](#) page on [IRS.gov](#) for additional information on tax payment options.

After you complete your return, be sure to sign and mail it to the address that applies to you in the latest Form 1040 [instructions](#). However, if you received an IRS [notice](#), mail the return to the address indicated in the notice.

Regardless of your reason for not filing, you should file your federal tax return as soon as possible. If you need help, be sure to check [IRS.gov](#). We have many tools and resources available to help you, such as the [Interactive Tax Assistant](#), [Tax Topics](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

NOTE TO EDITOR: Below are helpful resources about filing a tax return on [IRS.gov](#):

- [Do I Need to File a Tax Return?](#)
- [Form 1127](#) (PDF), *Application for Extension of Time for Payment of Tax Due to Undue Hardship*
- [Forms & Publications](#)
- [Tax Topic 153](#)