

IRS News Release

Media Relations Office

Washington, D.C.

Media Contact: 202.317.4000

www.irs.gov/newsroom

Public Contact: 800.829.1040

Free File Opens Today, Offers Free Tax Prep and E-filing

IRS YouTube Video:

[Welcome to Free File!](#)

IR-2014-04, Jan. 17, 2014

WASHINGTON — To help people get a jump on their taxes before the Jan. 31 filing season opens, the Internal Revenue Service today announced the immediate availability of Free File brand-name software for most taxpayers.

Fourteen commercial software companies that provide their Free File tax prep products at no cost began offering their products today -- available only at IRS.gov/freefile.

Although you can complete and e-file your tax return now, the Free File companies will hold it until Jan. 31 when the IRS begins accepting returns. As previously announced, the IRS delayed the filing season due to critical system testing following the federal government closure.

“Many tax preparers and tax software companies are now open for return preparation, including Free File. If you plan to get a head start on your taxes, remember to e-file. Electronic filing will allow software companies to hold your return and to automatically send it to the IRS on Jan. 31. There is absolutely no advantage to filing by paper,” said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. “If you want to save money and time, just use Free File to prepare and e-file your federal return at no charge.”

As Jan. 31 approaches, Koskinen reminded taxpayers that IRS.gov has a range of information and services to help taxpayers prepare their tax returns. “Free File is just one of the many services available through IRS.gov to help people with their taxes,” Koskinen said. “Additional services include Where’s My Refund for timely updates on refunds, YouTube videos with quick tax tips, and many other ways of getting information. We encourage taxpayers to explore IRS.gov as tax season approaches.”

Free File, a public-private partnership, is the free way to do your federal tax returns either by using brand-name software or online fillable forms. Free File software is available now to more than 100 million individuals and families that earn \$58,000 or less, which is 70 percent of taxpayers.

Starting Jan. 31, Free File Fillable Forms will be available to accept tax returns for free e-filing from any taxpayer who is comfortable preparing their own tax return.

Nearly 40 million taxpayers have used Free File since it debuted in 2003. These taxpayers have saved more than an estimated \$1.2 billion by using Free File.

Here's how it works:

- At [IRS.gov/freefile](https://www.irs.gov/freefile), select the “Free File Software” button. Each of the 14 Free File companies sets specific offers – generally based on income, state residency and age – to use their software. If your income is \$58,000 or less, you will find at least one, if not more, offers available to you.
- You can review each of the 14 company offers or use the IRS “[Help Me Find Free File Software](#)” tool to find an offer that matches your situation. Once you make your selection, you will be directed to the commercial provider’s website to begin preparing your return.
- Free File is for federal returns but most companies also offer state tax return preparation, some for free.
- If your income was more than \$58,000, you can still do your taxes and e-file them. Just select the “Free File Fillable Forms” button. Again, this product will be available starting Jan. 31.
- Free File Fillable Forms is the electronic version of IRS paper forms, and it is best for people used to doing their own taxes. This option helps with math but not with step-by-step assistance. Instructions for filling out the form can be found on the IRS website. State tax return preparation is not available using this option.

The fastest way to get your refund is by combining IRS e-file with direct deposit. Once the IRS begins processing returns, it expects to issue more than 90 percent of refunds in fewer than 21 days.

Check “Where’s My Refund?” for personalized refund information based on the processing of your 2013 tax return. You can start checking on the status of your return within 24 hours after the IRS accepts your e-filed return. Updates to refund status are made once a day so you don't need to check the status more than once a day.

The 14 Free File companies are part of a consortium called the Free File Alliance, which has partnered with the IRS for 11 years to make these commercial products available for free to taxpayers who don't earn high incomes. You must access these products through IRS.gov to be eligible for their free offers.

There also are a number of products to help spread the word about Free File. Companies, organizations, churches or others that have eligible employees, clients or customers can help increase awareness about Free File. Learn more at freefile.irs.gov/partners.