

## Sample article for organizations to use to reach customers (559 word count)

Publish/post the following article on your website or other communication vehicles to help your customers find a paid tax preparer or free tax help.

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### Follow these tips for finding a paid tax preparer or free tax help

If you need help preparing your tax return, choose help wisely. As a taxpayer, you are legally responsible for everything reported on your tax return; whether you prepare it yourself or have someone else prepare it for you.

#### When selecting an individual or company to prepare your taxes, here are a few tips.

- Check the person or company's qualifications.
- Check the preparer's history.
- Ask about their service fees.
- Make sure they are accessible after the April due date in case you have a question about your return.

#### The preparer you choose should:

- ask you to provide all receipts and records needed to prepare your return.
- not ask you to direct any part of your refund to an account that is not in your or your spouse's name.
- never ask you to sign a blank return.
- allow you to review the completed return, including all schedules and attachments, and explain it all to you before you sign it.
- sign the return, include their preparer tax identification number and provide you a copy.

Here are [more tips](#) to keep in mind and check the [Choose a Tax Professional](#) page on IRS.gov for helpful steps to ensure you are choosing a tax professional wisely.

#### If you can't afford a paid preparer, there are several options for free tax preparation.

- [Free File](#) is an option available to most taxpayers with income less than \$58,000. It's available at [IRS.gov](#) where a number of tax software companies make their products available for free.
- The [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance](#) program offers free tax preparation for low-to-moderate income taxpayers. To find a VITA site near you, visit [IRS.gov](#) and type the word *VITA* in the search engine and click on "Free tax return preparation for you by volunteers."
- [Tax Counseling for the Elderly](#) offers priority assistance to people who are 60 years of age and older. To find a TCE site near you, visit the [AARP locator Web page](#).

- At select volunteer tax sites, taxpayers also have an option to prepare their own basic federal and state tax return for free using Web-based tax preparation software with an IRS-certified volunteer to help guide you through the process. This option is only available at locations that list “**Self-Prep**” in the site listing.
- Active duty military members and their families can receive free tax preparation assistance at VITA sites within their installations. The volunteer return preparers are trained and equipped to address military specific tax issues.

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**Note to editor:** Below are additional resources available on [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov).

***On Twitter? Consider using this sample Tweet to inform your customers:***

No matter who prepares it, YOU are responsible for your #tax return information. Choose a preparer wisely. #IRS <http://go.usa.gov/cTAFG>

#IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program offers **#FreeTax Prep #VITA** if you earn \$54,000 or less. <http://go.usa.gov/nRG>.

#Tax Counseling for the Elderly offers **#FreeTaxPrep** with priority assistance if you are 60 years of age or older <http://go.usa.gov/nRG>.

## **IRS.gov**

[IR-2015-124](#) - Tax Preparedness Series: Make a Wise Choice when Selecting a Tax Preparer

## **You Tube**

[How to Use the Tax Preparer Directory](#)