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As teachers, administrators and aides have launched into their fall semester, taxes may not be on the top of their list. However, knowing what to keep track of now can help reduce the burden at tax time. The Internal Revenue Service reminds educators that there are three key work-related tax benefits that may help them reduce what they pay in taxes.

Educators can take advantage of tax deductions for qualified expenses related to their profession. The costs many educators incur out-of-pocket include items such as classroom supplies, training and travel.

There are two methods educators can choose for deducting qualified expenses: Claiming the Educator Expense Deduction (up to \$250) or, for those who itemize their deductions, claiming eligible work-related expenses as a miscellaneous deduction on Schedule A.

A third key benefit enables many teachers and other educators to take advantage of various [education tax benefits](#) for their ongoing educational pursuits, especially the [Lifetime Learning Credit](#) or, in some instances depending on their circumstances, the [American Opportunity Tax Credit](#).

Educator Expense Deduction

Educators can deduct up to \$250 (\$500 if married filing jointly and both spouses are eligible educators, but not more than \$250 each) of unreimbursed business expenses. The educator expense deduction, claimed on either Form 1040 Line 23 or Form 1040A Line 16, is available even if an educator doesn't itemize their deductions. To do so, the taxpayer must be a kindergarten through grade 12 teacher, instructor, counselor, principal or aide for at least 900 hours a school year in a school that provides elementary or secondary education as determined under state law.

Those who qualify can deduct costs like books, supplies, computer equipment and

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In addition, educators can claim other work-related expenses, such as the cost of subscriptions to professional journals, professional licenses and union dues.

Transportation expenses may also be deductible in situations such as, for example, where an educator assigned to teach at two different schools needs to drive from one school to the other on the same day.

Miscellaneous deductions of this kind are subject to a two-percent limit. This means that a taxpayer must subtract two percent of their adjusted gross income from the total qualifying miscellaneous deduction amount. For more information, see [Publication 529](#), Miscellaneous Deductions, available on IRS.gov.

Keeping Records

Educators should keep detailed records of qualifying expenses noting the date, amount and purpose of each purchase. This will help prevent a missed deduction at tax time.

Taxpayers should also [keep a copy of their tax return](#) for at least three years. Copies of tax returns may be needed for many reasons. If applying for college financial aid, a tax transcript may be all that is needed. A tax transcript summarizes return information and includes adjusted gross income. Get one from the IRS for free.

The quickest way to get a copy of a tax transcript is to use the [Get Transcript](#) application. After verifying identity, taxpayers can view and print their transcript immediately online. The online application includes a [robust identity verification process](#). Those who can't pass the verification must request the transcript be mailed. This takes five to 10 days, so plan ahead and request the transcript early.

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