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**PRODUCT & SERVICE GUIDE**

# IRS to Accept Income Tax Returns Starting January 19, 2016

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Following a review of the tax extenders legislation signed into law this week, the [Internal Revenue Service](#) says that tax season will begin as scheduled on Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2016.

The IRS will begin accepting individual electronic returns that day. The IRS expects to receive more than 150 million individual returns in 2016, with more than four out of five being prepared using tax return preparation software and e-filed. The IRS will begin processing paper tax returns at the same time. There is no advantage to people filing tax returns on paper in early January instead of waiting for e-file to begin.

“We look forward to opening the 2016 tax season on time,” IRS Commissioner John Koskinen said. “Our employees have been working hard throughout this year to make this happen. We also appreciate the help from the nation’s tax professionals and the software community, who are critical to helping taxpayers during the filing season.”

As part of the [Security Summit](#) initiative, the IRS has been working closely with the tax industry and state revenue departments to provide stronger protections against identity theft for taxpayers during the coming filing season.

The filing deadline to submit 2015 tax returns is Monday, April 18, 2016, rather than the traditional April 15 date. Washington, D.C., will celebrate Emancipation Day on that Friday, which pushes the deadline to the following Monday for most of the nation. (Due to Patriots Day, the deadline will be Tuesday, April 19, in Maine and Massachusetts.)

Koskinen noted the new legislation makes permanent many provisions and extends many others for several years. “This provides certainty for planning purposes, which will help taxpayers and the tax community as well as the IRS,” he said.

The IRS urges all taxpayers to make sure they have all their year-end statements in hand before filing, including Forms W-2 from employers, Forms 1099 from banks and other payers, and Form 1095-A from the Marketplace for those claiming the premium tax credit.

“We encourage taxpayers to take full advantage of the expanding array of tools and information on IRS.gov to make their tax preparation easier,” Koskinen said.

Although the IRS begins accepting returns on Jan. 19, many tax software companies will begin accepting tax returns earlier in January and submitting them to the IRS when processing systems open.

Choosing [e-file](#) and [direct deposit](#) for refunds remains the fastest and safest way to file an accurate income tax return and receive a refund. The IRS anticipates issuing more than nine out of 10 refunds in less than 21 days. Find free options to get tax help, and to prepare and file your return on IRS.gov or in your community if you qualify. Go to IRS.gov and click on the Filing tab to see your options.

- Seventy percent of the nation’s taxpayers are eligible for IRS Free File. Commercial partners of the IRS offer free brand-name software to about 100 million individuals and families with incomes of \$62,000 or less;
- Online fillable forms provides electronic versions of IRS paper forms to all taxpayers regardless of income that can be prepared and filed by people comfortable with completing their own returns.
- The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) offer free tax help to people who qualify. Go to [irs.gov](#) and enter “free tax prep” in the search box to learn more and find a VITA or TCE site near you, or download the IRS2Go app on your smart phone and find a free tax prep provider.

The IRS also reminds taxpayers that a trusted tax professional can provide helpful information and advice about the ever-changing tax code. [Tips for choosing a return preparer](#) and details about [national tax professional groups](#) are available on IRS.gov.

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