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Nov. 01, 2017

It's time for the nation's more than 727,000 federal tax return preparers to renew their Preparer Tax Identification Numbers (PTINs) for 2018. All current PTINs will expire Dec. 31, 2017.

Anyone who prepares or helps prepare any federal tax return, or claim for refund for compensation must have a valid PTIN from the IRS. The PTIN must be used as the identifying number on returns prepared. Failure to have and use a valid PTIN may result in penalties.

"We ask that you renew your PTIN as soon as possible to avoid a last-minute rush," said Carol A. Campbell, Director, IRS Return Preparer Office. "It's easy to let this slip as the holiday season approaches."

For those who have a 2017 PTIN, the renewal process takes a few moments online. Those who cannot remember their user ID and password can find online tools to assist them. Preparers can get started at www.irs.gov/ptin. If registering for the first time, the PTIN application may also be completed online. There is no fee for obtaining or renewing a PTIN.

Paper [Form W-12](#), IRS Paid Preparer Tax Identification Number Application and Renewal, is available for paper applications and renewals, and takes four to six weeks to process.

All enrolled agents, regardless of whether they prepare returns, must have a PTIN in order to maintain their status.

Annual Filing Season Program Participation Kicks Off

The voluntary IRS Annual Filing Season Program is intended to encourage non-

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requirements in Treasury Department Circular No. 230. The IRS has a [video](#) to demonstrate how to sign the Circular 230 consent and print the Record of Completion.

Enrolled Agent Credential

The Annual Filing Season Program is a filing season qualification while the enrolled agent program provides professional status. The enrolled agent credential is an elite credential issued by the IRS to tax professionals who demonstrate special competence in federal tax planning, individual and business tax return preparation and representation matters. Enrolled agents have unlimited representation rights; allowing them to represent any client before the IRS on any tax matter. As non-credentialed return preparers consider the next steps in their professional career, the IRS encourages them to consider becoming an enrolled agent.

Enrolled agents and participants in the Annual Filing Season Program are included in the [Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers with Credentials and Select Qualifications](#) created on IRS.gov to help explain the various tax return preparer credentials and qualifications to taxpayers. The directory also contains information on attorneys, certified public accountants, enrolled retirement plan agents and enrolled actuaries who are registered with the IRS.

Additional information on the enrolled agent program is available [here](#). Information on understanding tax return preparer credentials and qualifications [is also available](#)..

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