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PRODUCT & SERVICE GUIDE

Time to Renew Your PTIN

Anyone who prepares or helps prepare a federal tax return for compensation must have a valid PTIN from the IRS before preparing returns, and they need to include the PTIN as the identifying number on any return filed with the IRS.

Oct. 20, 2020

The screenshot shows the IRS website's 'PTIN Requirements for Tax Return Preparers' page. The top navigation bar includes the IRS logo, 'Help', 'News', 'English', 'Charities & Nonprofits', and 'Tax Pros'. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with 'File', 'Pay', 'Refunds', 'Credits & Deductions', 'Forms & Instructions', and a search bar. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: 'Home / Tax Pros / PTIN Requirements for Tax Return Preparers'. The title 'PTIN Requirements for Tax Return Preparers' is prominently displayed. On the left, a sidebar lists various categories: 'Enrolled Agents', 'Annual Filing Season Program Participants', 'Enrolled Retirement Plan Agents', 'Certified Professional Employer Organization (CPEO)', 'Enrolled Actuaries', 'E-File Providers', and 'Modernized e-File'. The main text explains that PTIN applications and renewals for 2021 are being processed and that anyone preparing federal tax returns for compensation must have a valid 2021 PTIN. It also mentions the 'Public Directory' and the 'Annual Filing Season Program'. A section titled 'Renew your PTIN in 3 easy steps:' is followed by a table with three columns: '1. Access Your Account', '2. Renew Your PTIN', and '3. Pay Your Fee'. The 'Hot Topics' section on the right lists several links: 'Access your online PTIN account', 'Troubleshoot PTIN System Issues', 'Frequently Asked Questions: Do I Need a PTIN?', 'Requirements for Tax Return Preparers: Frequently Asked Questions', 'Stay Informed', 'Contact the Return Preparer Program', and 'Tax Pro News and Resources'. An image of hands typing on a keyboard is visible in the bottom right corner of the screenshot.

Enrolled Agents

Annual Filing Season Program Participants

Enrolled Retirement Plan Agents

Certified Professional Employer Organization (CPEO)

Enrolled Actuaries

E-File Providers

Modernized e-File

Preparer tax identification number (PTIN) applications and renewals for 2021 are now being processed.

Anyone who prepares or assists in preparing federal tax returns for compensation must have a valid 2021 PTIN before preparing returns. All enrolled agents must also have a valid PTIN.

Are you a non-credentialed return preparer looking to set yourself APART? Do you want to be included in the [Public Directory](#) of return preparers or desire limited representation rights for your clients? If so, check out the [Annual Filing Season Program](#) which recognizes the efforts of non-credentialed return preparers who aspire to a higher level of professionalism.

Renew your PTIN in 3 easy steps:

1. Access Your Account	2. Renew Your PTIN	3. Pay Your Fee
If you already have an online PTIN account, login now .	Complete the online renewal application. You must verify your personal information and answer a few	Pay the \$35.95 renewal fee via credit/debit/ATM card or eCheck. Upon completion of your application and payment, you'll receive

Hot Topics

- [Access your online PTIN account](#)
- [Troubleshoot PTIN System Issues](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions: Do I Need a PTIN?](#)
- [Requirements for Tax Return Preparers: Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Stay Informed](#)
- [Contact the Return Preparer Program](#)
- [Tax Pro News and Resources](#)

What do the more than 780,000 active tax return preparers in America have in common? They all need to renew their Preparer Tax Identification Numbers before

the start of the upcoming tax filing season. All current PTINs will expire Dec. 31, 2020.

“Large segments of the taxpaying public rely on tax return preparers to assist them in complying with their filing and payment obligations” said IRS Return Preparer Director, Carol A. Campbell. “Obtain or renew your PTIN now so you will be prepared to assist when filing season opens.”

Anyone who prepares or helps prepare a federal tax return for compensation must have a valid PTIN from the IRS before preparing returns, and they need to include the PTIN as the identifying number on any return filed with the IRS.

Tax preparers must pay a [fee of \\$35.95 to renew or obtain a PTIN for 2021](#). The PTIN fee is non-refundable.

Tax preparers with a 2020 PTIN should use the online renewal process, which takes about 15 minutes to complete. [Form W-12](#), along with the [instructions](#), provides a paper option for PTIN applications and renewals. However, the paper form can take four to six weeks to process. Failure to have and use a valid PTIN may result in penalties.

To renew a PTIN online:

- Start at [IRS.gov/tax-professionals](#).
- Select the “[Renew or Register](#)” button.
- Enter the user ID and password to login to the online PTIN account.
- Follow the prompts to verify information and answer a few questions.

Once completed, users will receive confirmation of their PTIN renewal.

The online system not only allows PTIN renewal, but can also be used by tax preparers to view a summary of the number of filed returns their PTIN has appeared on in the current year, and to receive communications through a secure mailbox from the IRS Return Preparer Office.

First time PTIN applicants can also apply for a PTIN online.

To apply for a PTIN online:

- Start at [IRS.gov/tax-professionals](#).

- Select the “[Renew or Register](#)” button and select “Create Account” in the New User box.
- First time users are issued a temporary password and will be prompted to change their password upon logging in.
- Select the appropriate “PTIN Sign Up” option once logged in.
- Follow the prompts to obtain the PTIN online.

Opportunity for non-credentialed tax preparers

The [Annual Filing Season Program](#) is a voluntary IRS program intended to encourage non-credentialed tax return preparers to take continuing education courses to increase their knowledge and improve their filing season readiness.

Those who choose to participate must renew their PTIN, complete 18 hours of continuing education from [IRS-approved CE providers](#) and consent to adhere to specific obligations in Circular 230 by Dec. 31, 2020. The IRS has a [video](#) available on how to sign the Circular 230 consent and print the Record of Completion.

After completing the steps, the return preparer receives an Annual Filing Season Program [Record of Completion](#) from the IRS. Program participants are then included in a public [directory](#) of return preparers with credentials and select qualifications on the IRS website.

The searchable IRS directory helps taxpayers find [preparers](#) in their area who have completed the program or hold professional credentials recognized by the IRS.

Enrolled agent credential

The [enrolled agent credential](#) is an elite certification 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 think about next steps in their professional career, the IRS encourages them to [consider becoming](#) an enrolled agent.

All enrolled agents, regardless of whether they prepare returns, must renew their PTIN annually in order to maintain their active status.

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