

# The Tax Picture

## Tips For Eliminating Errors And Stress At Tax Time

(NAPSA)—It's almost tax time. Whether you love it or dread it, there are ways to make doing your taxes easy and painless.

First, gather your tax documents and information. You'll need W-2s from your employer, receipts, a copy of last year's return and any 1098s and 1099s. Avoid forgetting something important by using a tax return checklist at [www.taxact.com/checklist](http://www.taxact.com/checklist).

Next, take a few minutes to get informed. Tax law changes every year, especially in recent years. Taxes have a major impact on your personal finances—why not have a basic understanding of them to make sure you're getting all your money? You also don't want to miss out on the several tax breaks that expire after 2011. Getting informed is as easy as reading a brief section called "What's New for 2011" in IRS Publication 17 at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

Third, prepare your return online or download software and use a free solution. Why pay if you don't have to? Do a little research about free solutions to make sure your situation is covered. You can try online products risk-free, so take a couple for a test-drive. Many experts consider TaxACT to be the most complete free tax product.

Tax preparation solutions walk you through every step, from start to finish, at your pace. They're designed for users who know a lot about taxes and those who know nothing about them. Top solutions provide free tax help and back your results with several guarantees. If you're thinking about changing solutions or filing for the first time, TaxACT in particular makes the transition easy with data import and fast start options.

Electronically file your return. E-filing is easy, convenient and safe. It's also the only filing method that allows you to receive confirmation from the IRS when



### Simple strategies for making tax time easier and faster.

your return is received and processed.

Getting a refund? Select direct deposit. Combined with e-file, you'll receive your refund in eight to 10 days, rather than six to eight weeks for a check.

Fourth, don't procrastinate. The IRS filing deadline for 2011 tax returns is April 17, 2012. You could lose money from errors due to rushing, including typos and missed tax benefits. If you've experienced major life changes during the year, allot some extra time to make sure you get all your tax benefits.

Need more time to file? Request an automatic six-month filing extension by filing IRS Form 4868. Keep in mind, a filing extension does not extend your time to pay, so pay as much as possible by April 17, 2012. Failing to pay on time results in penalties and interest that could increase your tax bill by more than 25 percent.

If you can't afford to pay what you owe, the IRS offers help. Call the agency to discuss installment plans, payment options, extended time to pay and other assistance.

More tax time tips can be found at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). Learn about TaxACT and start your free federal return at [www.taxact.com](http://www.taxact.com). You can also visit [www.taxact.com/taxinfo](http://www.taxact.com/taxinfo) for a list of key tax law changes.