

Tax Document Checklist

Getting your tax return done right starts with the right documents. Use this checklist to quickly identify what to upload and why each item matters. If you're missing something, don't worry, Pivot Aide Tax will guide you, help you retrieve or substitute acceptable records, and keep your filing accurate and audit-ready. Below is the document list to get you prepared.

1. Personal Information and Identity

For You (and Spouse, if filing jointly)

- **Government-issued ID (Driver's License/State ID/Passport)**
 - Confirms identity and supports e-file verification.
- **Social Security cards or ITIN letters**
 - Confirms correct taxpayer numbers; prevents rejected returns and mismatches.
- **Date of birth (you, spouse, dependents)**
 - Impacts credits, filing rules, and eligibility for certain tax benefits.

Address and Contact

- **Current mailing address + phone/email**
 - Determines state/local filing requirements and where official notices are sent.
- **Bank account info (routing/account number)**
 - For direct deposit of refund or direct debit for payments.

2) Prior-Year Tax Records

- **Last year's federal and state tax returns (Form 1040 + state return)**
 - Provides carryovers (losses, credits), prior depreciation, prior-year AGI for identity verification, and continuity items.
- **IRS Identity Protection PIN (IP PIN), if issued**
 - Required to e-file if you have one; helps prevent identity theft.

3) Income Documents (Most Common)

Employment Income

- **W-2 (Wage and Tax Statement)**
 - Reports wages, withholding, Social Security/Medicare wages, retirement contributions, and employer benefits.

Independent Contractor / Self-Employment

- **1099-NEC**
 - Nonemployee compensation (contractor income).
- **1099-K**
 - Payment card/third-party processor receipts (e.g., Stripe, PayPal, Square). Often *gross* receipts—expenses must be reported separately.
- **1099-MISC**
 - Other income types such as rents, prizes, royalties, or miscellaneous payments (varies by box).

Unemployment and Other Government Payments

- **1099-G**
 - Unemployment compensation and/or state tax refunds (state refunds may be taxable depending on prior deductions).

Retirement / Social Security

- **1099-R**
 - Distributions from pensions, annuities, IRAs/401(k)s; shows taxable portion, withholding, and rollover codes.
- **SSA-1099**
 - Social Security benefits received; may be partially taxable depending on total income.

Investment Income

- **1099-INT**
 - Interest income (banks, savings, CDs).
- **1099-DIV**
 - Dividends and capital gain distributions.
- **1099-B (Brokerage statement)**
 - Sales of stocks/ETFs/crypto (sometimes combined); used to compute capital gains/losses.
- **Consolidated 1099**
 - A broker packet that may include INT/DIV/B; typically the main set for investment reporting.

Other Income

- **Schedule K-1 (Form 1065/1120S/1041)**
 - Your share of partnership/S-corp/trust income, deductions, credits.
- **Alimony received (for agreements under pre-2019 rules)**
 - May be taxable depending on divorce agreement date.
- **Gambling winnings (W-2G)**
 - Reports winnings and withholding; losses may be deductible with documentation.

4) Business or Self-Employed Expenses (Schedule C / Small Business)

Provide supporting documents for expenses claimed against self-employment income:

Core Records

- **Business bank statements (all months)**
 - Verifies income/expenses and substantiates transactions.
- **Business credit card statements**
 - Tracks business purchases; supports deductions.
- **Bookkeeping reports (Profit & Loss, Balance Sheet, General Ledger) if available**
 - Summarizes activity; reduces prep time and errors.

Common Expense Categories (Examples of Documentation)

- **Receipts/invoices for supplies, materials, subcontractors**
 - Proves deductible purchases and cost of goods/services.
- **Home office details (square footage of home and office, rent/mortgage, utilities)**
 - Supports home office deduction calculations.
- **Vehicle/mileage log OR actual expense records (gas, repairs, insurance)**
 - Required for auto deductions; mileage logs should include date, purpose, miles.
- **Phone/internet bills**
 - Business-use percentage may be deductible.
- **Advertising/marketing receipts**
 - Deductible business promotion costs.
- **Travel records (airfare, hotel, meals) with business purpose**
 - Requires substantiation; meals are subject to limits.

- **Equipment purchases (computers, machinery) + purchase invoices**
 - May be deducted or depreciated depending on type and timing.

1099 Compliance (If You Paid Contractors)

- **Contractor list: names, addresses, W-9s, amounts paid**
 - Needed to issue 1099-NEC/1099-MISC where required.

5) Rental Property (Schedule E)

- **Rental income records (leases, rent ledger, deposits)**
 - Reports rental income and timing.
- **Expenses: repairs, HOA, property management, utilities, insurance**
 - Supports rental deductions.
- **Property taxes statements**
 - Deductible rental expense (if for rental property).
- **Mortgage interest (Form 1098)**
 - Interest is deductible on Schedule E for rentals.
- **Closing statement / settlement statement (HUD-1/CD) for purchases/sales**
 - Establishes cost basis and acquisition costs.
- **Depreciation info (prior returns or asset list)**
 - Determines ongoing depreciation and prevents recapture issues later.

6) Homeownership and Real Estate (Personal)

- **Form 1098 (Mortgage Interest Statement)**
 - Mortgage interest and points; may support itemized deductions.
- **Property tax bills**
 - May be deductible (subject to SALT limits).
- **Sale of home: Form 1099-S and Closing Disclosure**
 - Reports sale proceeds; used to calculate gain and possible exclusion eligibility.

7) Deductions and Credits (Common)

Education

- **Form 1098-T**
 - Tuition/education expenses; supports education credits.
- **Receipts for required course materials**
 - May increase eligible education expenses in certain cases.
- **Student loan interest (Form 1098-E)**
 - Interest may be deductible within income limits.

Childcare and Dependents

- **Childcare provider statement (name, address, EIN/SSN, amount paid)**
 - Supports Child and Dependent Care Credit.
- **School/camp payment records (qualifying childcare)**
 - May support childcare credit if it enables you to work.

Health Insurance and Medical (Selected Cases)

- **Form 1095-A (Marketplace insurance)**
 - Required to reconcile premium tax credits; very important.
- **Form 1095-B / 1095-C (if received)**
 - Proof of coverage (not always required for filing, but keep on file).
- **HSA forms: 1099-SA (distributions) and 5498-SA (contributions)**

- Supports HSA reporting and deductibility.

Charitable Contributions

- **Donation receipts and acknowledgment letters**
 - Required for substantiation; larger donations need additional documentation.
- **Non-cash donations list with values**
 - Supports Schedule A non-cash contributions; special rules apply.

Retirement Contributions

- **IRA contribution confirmations**
 - Determines deductions/credits and correct reporting.

8) Taxes Paid, Estimated Payments, and Notices

- **Estimated tax payment confirmations (federal/state)**
 - Prevents underreporting payments and balance due surprises.
- **Prior-year state/local tax payments**
 - May affect deductions or carryovers.
- **IRS/state letters or notices (any year)**
 - Critical for resolving mismatches, audits, identity verification, or balance issues.

9) Life Events (Documents That Change Filing)

- **Marriage certificate / divorce decree**
 - Impacts filing status, dependents, alimony treatment.
- **Custody agreement (if applicable)**
 - Helps determine who can claim the child and what credits apply.
- **Birth/adoption records**
 - Supports new dependent claims and credits.
- **Death certificate (if filing for a deceased taxpayer)**
 - Required for final return processing.
- **Proof of residency for dependents (school/medical records)**
 - Supports dependency and certain credits.

10) Special Situations (If Applicable)

Cryptocurrency / Digital Assets

- **Exchange statements and transaction history**
 - Needed to compute gains/losses and report disposals accurately.

Foreign Income / Accounts

- **Foreign bank account details (maximum balances, account info)**
 - May trigger FBAR/other reporting depending on thresholds.
- **Foreign income statements, taxes paid abroad**
 - May support foreign tax credit or reporting requirements.

Trusts / Estates

- **Schedule K-1 (Form 1041)**
 - Reports income distributions from a trust/estate.

11) Business Tax Returns (Entities)

If you are a business client filing an entity return:

- **Prior-year business return (1120, 1120S, 1065)**

- Provides carryovers and basis/depreciation continuity.
- **Year-end financials (P&L, Balance Sheet)**
 - The backbone of business tax reporting.
- **Payroll reports (W-2/W-3, 941/940, state payroll filings)**
 - Supports wage expense and payroll compliance.
- **Sales tax filings (if applicable)**
 - Helps validate revenue and tax compliance.
- **Fixed asset list and depreciation schedule**
 - Required to calculate depreciation correctly.

12) “What If I Don’t Have Everything?”

If something is missing, provide:

- **A short written explanation of what’s missing and why**
 - Helps us advise the safest next step (retrieve, reconstruct, or report using alternative records).
- **Any substitute records**
 - Bank statements, pay stubs, invoices, account screenshots, or employer/broker portals often help.