



e-News for Tax Professionals

January 26, 2026

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Inside This Issue

1. [Filing season begins January 26](#)
2. [Earned Income Tax Credit resources are available for tax professionals to share](#)
3. [Avoid scams](#)
4. [Report data breaches](#)

1. Filing season begins January 26

The IRS [began accepting individual tax returns](#) today, Monday, Jan. 26, 2026, at 9 a.m. Eastern Time. To help tax professionals and their clients [get ready](#) to file tax returns, this special edition of e-News for Tax Professionals provides resources and reminders. Please take time to review this content. Tax professionals can forward this message to their clients or use the content in their own communications.

[Back to top](#)

2. Earned Income Tax Credit resources are available for tax professionals to share

The IRS and its partners observed [Earned Income Tax Credit \(EITC\) Awareness Day](#) on Friday, Jan. 23, 2026. The IRS asks tax professionals to help inform individuals about the resources available for claiming the EITC.

To claim this valuable credit, American working families need to meet specific criteria and file a tax return, even if they are not obligated to do so based

Useful Links:

[IRS.gov](#)
[Tax Professionals Home](#)
[All Forms and Instructions](#)
[Stakeholders Partners'](#)
[Headliners](#)
[Training and Communication Tools](#)
[e-Services](#)
[Taxpayer Advocate Service](#)
[Disaster Relief](#)
[Internal Revenue Bulletins](#)
[IRS Social Media](#)

Upcoming Events

Seminars, Workshops, Conferences, and Other Practitioner Activities By State:

[Nationwide Webinars](#)
[Alabama](#)
[Alaska](#)
[Arizona](#)
[Arkansas](#)
[California](#)

on their earnings. The IRS encourages individuals to utilize the [EITC Assistant](#) to determine eligibility, or to refer to the [child-related tax benefits comparison](#) for basic eligibility guidelines.

The IRS also reminds taxpayers that the fastest way to get a tax refund is by filing an accurate tax return [electronically](#) and choosing [direct deposit](#) for their refund.

Tax professionals and their clients should visit [IRS.gov](#) as their primary source for important information during the filing season. Even if a taxpayer does not qualify for the EITC, they may still be eligible for other credits or deductions. The [Interactive Tax Assistant](#) is available as a resource to help taxpayers assess their eligibility for the Child Tax Credit, Additional Child Tax Credit, or Credit for Other Dependents.

For more information visit [EITC Awareness Day](#) on [IRS.gov](#).

[Back to top](#)

3. Avoid scams

Tax season is a busy time for tax professionals. It's a [busy time for criminals too](#) as they ramp up efforts to trick people into sharing sensitive personal information. Identity thieves might use this information to try filing false tax returns and stealing refunds.

The IRS and [Security Summit](#) partners want taxpayers, tax professionals and businesses to keep a watchful eye out for these [threats](#):

- Social media scams: Bad tax advice on social media can mislead taxpayers about their credit or refund eligibility. Influencers may convince taxpayers to lie on tax forms or suggest the IRS is keeping a tax credit secret from them. Social media posts may put taxpayers in touch with scammers.

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[Rhode Island](#)

- Phishing and smishing: The IRS frequently warns against phishing emails and smishing texts, which are common tactics used by criminals to steal personal and financial information. The impersonator wants taxpayers to send them money. Opening links and attachments may harm their computer.
- Scams targeting seniors: Scammers target people over age 65 or nearing retirement for personal or financial information or money. Often, once seniors give them money, the scammers ask for more. When scammers trick them to withdraw from their retirement account, it could affect their taxes.
- Cyberattacks on businesses and tax professionals: The IRS reminds tax professionals of their legal obligation to have a [Written Information Security Plan](#) and to use multi-factor authentication. Businesses are also advised to update their security measures and remain vigilant against cyberattacks.

Taxpayers can get an [identity protection PIN](#) (IP PIN) from the IRS. An IP PIN is a six-digit number that prevents someone else from filing a tax return using a taxpayer's Social Security number or individual taxpayer identification number. If taxpayers don't already have an IP PIN, they may get an IP PIN as a proactive step to protect themselves from tax-related identity theft. Anyone with an SSN or an ITIN can get an IP PIN including individuals living abroad.

[Back to top](#)

4. Report data breaches

Even a careful, prepared tax professional may fall victim to a data breach. If that happens, tax professionals need to immediately [take action](#) to protect their clients and their business.

[South Carolina](#)
[South Dakota](#)
[Tennessee](#)
[Texas](#)
[Utah](#)
[Vermont](#)
[Virginia](#)
[Washington](#)
[West Virginia](#)
[Wisconsin](#)
[Wyoming](#)

[Back to top](#)

The tax preparer should report client data theft to their [IRS stakeholder liaison](#). The liaison will notify IRS Criminal Investigation and others within the agency on the tax professional's behalf. If reported quickly, the IRS can take steps to block fraudulent returns in clients' names. After a tax professional reports the data breach, an IRS data breach team member will contact the tax professional for information.

The IRS will deactivate the tax professional's EFIN to prevent criminals from using it to file tax returns.

Contact the IRS e-Help desk at 1-866-255-0654 to request a new EFIN.

After reporting a data breach, tax professionals should remain alert for any anomalies. They should monitor their PTIN, CAF number and new EFIN for misuse.

Though tax professionals should contact their stakeholder liaison as quickly as possible after seeing signs of a breach, they should not direct their clients to contact the stakeholder liaison. Refer clients to the IRS [Identity theft guide for individuals](#) or [Identity theft information for businesses](#).

Here are steps tax professionals should take in advance of the filing season:

- Implement multifactor authentication for access to the operational technology (OT) network whenever applicable.
- If the tax professional requires remote access, implement a firewall and/or virtual private network (VPN) in front of the programmable logic controller (PLC) to control network access. A VPN or gateway device can enable multifactor authentication for remote access even if the PLC doesn't support multifactor authentication.
- Create strong backups of the logic and configurations to enable fast recovery.
- Keep software updated with the latest versions by the manufacturer.

Red flags of a possible data breach include:

- Slow or unexpected computer or network responsiveness such as:
 - Software is slow or actions take longer to process than usual.
 - Computer cursor moves or changes numbers without touching the mouse or keyboard.
 - Unexpectedly being locked out of a network or computer.
- Client tax returns are being rejected because their Social Security number was already used on another return.
- Clients receive IRS authentication letters (5071C, 6331C, 4883C, 5747C) even though a tax return wasn't filed.
- Getting more e-file receipt acknowledgements than the tax professional filed.
- The IRS disabled the tax professional's online account.
- Transcripts delivered to the tax professional's Secure Object Repository that they did not order.
- Notification from the IRS that the tax professional's Centralized Authorized File number has been compromised.
- Notification from the IRS regarding a client that they do not represent.

[Back to top](#)



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