

# Five Items to Bring to Meet Your Tax Preparer

Filing taxes is one of the responsibilities most adults prefer to ignore until well after the new year rolls around. If you're like most Americans, you may not know all of the basic information needed to complete a tax return.

That's why so many people turn to licensed professionals and accountants to file their taxes. But do you even know what documents to give a tax preparer? Don't sweat it, you're not alone. A survey of more than 1,000 taxpayers ages 22 to 62 showed eight out of 10 didn't know the details for submitting a tax return.

The National Association of Enrolled Agents (NAEA) recommends using a checklist to get tax information in order before visiting a preparer. NAEA is a professional association of tax practitioners licensed by the Department of Treasury, meaning they specialize solely in tax matters and they have unlimited representational rights before the IRS. In short, they know what they're talking about.

Prepare to meet your preparer with the following:

## 1. Last year's tax return.

Last year's return will list social security numbers, dependants, credits and deductions previously taken.

## 2. All W-2s from past year.

Your W-2 tells you and your preparer how much you earned and how much was withheld for state and federal taxes. If you have multiple jobs, you must have a W-2 from each. If employers haven't sent out W-2s by Jan. 31, you can call the IRS to receive them.

## 3. 1099 forms.

The 1099 keeps track of additional income, earned interest, cancellation of debt, dividends received and proceeds from broker transactions.

## 4. Receipts for donations.

Even if you're not some big philanthropist, you may be surprised to recall the charitable contributions you made in the past year. Just remember to keep the receipts for all breast cancer or marathon sponsorships, Salvation Army donations, holiday charities, etc.

## 5. 1098 forms.

Homeowners shouldn't miss out on a mortgage interest deduction, especially if it makes the difference between owing money or getting a refund. Other items of note on this form are student loan interest and charitable contributions.