



HIRING A TAX PREPARER

Be careful when selecting a licensed tax preparation business to prepare your tax return.

A “TAX PREPARER” DOES NOT INCLUDE

- An attorney-at-law and the employees of an attorney-at-law who is a tax preparer;
- A certified public accountant and the employees of a certified public accountant who is a tax preparer;
- An officer or employee of a federal, state, or local governmental agency who provides tax preparation services in the scope of his employment; or
- An administrator, conservator, guardian, executor, trustee, receiver or other representative.

CHECK

- Check for a City of Chicago Business License prominently displayed and visible to the customers.
- Check the Preparer’s History. Check with the Better Business Bureau to see if the preparer has a questionable history and how they are rated.
- Check the Preparer’s Qualifications. All paid tax return preparers are required to have a Preparer Tax Identification Number from the IRS.

TIPS

- Know your rights by reviewing the Consumer Bill of Rights
<https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/bacp/Consumer%20Information/20161102consumerbillofrightstaxpreparer.pdf> and
<https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/bacp/general/20170131spanishconsumerbillofrightstaxpreparer.pdf>
- Be aware that prior to entering into any contract, the tax preparer must provide you with a written estimate of the total charge based upon the tax preparation services you have selected to purchase.
- Carefully review the “Income Tax Preparation Disclosure Form” provided by the preparer.
- Make sure you will be able to contact the tax preparer after you file your return, even after the April 15 due date. This may be helpful if questions arise about your tax return.
- Avoid Large Refund Claims. Be wary of any preparers who claim they can obtain larger refunds than other preparers.

RESOURCES

- Find a Free Tax Preparer. The City of Chicago has partnered with the Center for Economic Progress and Ladder Up to support eligible families and individuals who cannot afford professional tax preparation services. Visit www.taxprepchicago.org to find the nearest free tax preparation site.
- Consumers are urged to use the CHI 311 system (call 3-1-1, use the CHI311 mobile app, or visit 311.chicago.gov) to report fraud or other possible illegal practices by businesses or contractors located in Chicago.

#ChicagoConsumer