

Help your preparer get your tax return right with the **tax credits** you have earned.



Life's a little easier with

Tax Credits

Tax return preparers, paid or volunteer, must ask many tough questions to figure out your correct filing status, total income, deductions and credits.

These credits include:

- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Child Tax Credit (CTC)
- Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC)
- Credit for Other Dependents (ODC)
- American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC)

Because the tax laws are complex, deciding if you qualify is not obvious.

Your return preparer also needs to see your Forms W-2, other income statements and receipts. He or she will ask for your worksheets or records if you are self-employed or own a business. If you had income that wasn't documented, tell your return preparer. Your return preparer will ask questions about your living arrangements and relationships to get your tax return right.

You can help by giving your return preparer all the needed information and answering all questions. Your return preparer is required by law to make sure your tax return is correct, complete and consistent. By giving all the right information, you greatly reduce your chance of being audited and paying additional tax, penalty or interest.

You need to protect yourself. Before you sign your tax return:

- Review your return with your return preparer to make sure it is complete and correct.
- Make sure anyone you pay to prepare a tax return enters his or her preparer tax identification number (PTIN) and signs the return (returns prepared at a volunteer site should have the site identification number but the volunteer does not sign the return).
- Make sure you are given a copy of your tax return to keep.

Remember, even if you have someone else prepare your tax return, YOU are still responsible for everything on it!

If your return is audited and the EITC, CTC/ACTC/ODC, or AOTC is disallowed, you must pay back any amount refunded in error plus any additional amount assessed, with interest, and may be:

- Required to file Form 8862, Information to Claim Certain Credits After Disallowance, to claim the credit again
- Banned from claiming the credit for two years if the IRS finds the error is due to reckless or intentional disregard of the rules
- Banned from claiming the credit for ten years if the IRS finds the error is due to fraud

Even though you are responsible for everything on your tax return, your return preparer must sign your tax return and meet certain due diligence requirements. If they fail to meet these requirements, they can also face:

- Return preparer penalties
- Suspension or expulsion from IRS e-file
- Disciplinary action by the IRS Office of Professional Responsibility
- An injunction barring them from preparing tax returns for others
- Criminal penalties for filing fraudulent returns