

This lesson will help you determine which taxpayers must or should file a tax return. You will also find information on how to verify a taxpayer's identity, which form to use, and completing the Basic Information Section, which are the first steps in building a new return in TaxSlayer.

Learning Objectives

- Determine who must file and who should file a tax return
- Verify taxpayer identity
- Determine which forms to use and how to file the return

Getting Started:



Study the associated IRS VITA/TCE Training Guide Chapter 4 Filing Basics.



Open [Volunteer Resource Guide](#) **Tabs A and B.**

Tab A is Who Needs to File

Tab B is Preparing the Return

Tax-Aide Learning Hints:

- Counselors are encouraged to use the Pub 4012 Filing Status and Dependency tools in Tabs B and C rather relying on the Filing Status tool contained in Practice Lab or TaxSlayerPro production.

Hint from NTTC Modifications to the IRS Training Guide

Tax-Aide recommends everyone e-file to detect and prevent tax identity theft.

Who should file

PTC: A taxpayer that is eligible for premium tax credit should file even if they did not get advance premium tax credits.

Zero-AGI returns

To assist in identifying and preventing tax identity theft, Tax-Aide recommends all taxpayers to e-file. Because -0- AGI returns cannot be e-filed, enter \$1 as other income. Describe as "IN ORDER TO E-FILE."

Tips:

- Taxpayers who received advance premium tax credits are required to file a return to reconcile the allowable credit.
- The earned income credit may apply with or without a child. See the Earned Income Credit and Child Tax Credit lessons for details on determining eligibility.
- A spouse who is Married Filing Separately is not required to provide the Social Security card for the other spouse.
- Some Canadians have both U.S. and Canadian Social Security numbers. Never use the Canadian number on a U.S. tax return
- Taxpayers who cannot obtain an SSN must apply for an ITIN if they file a U.S. tax return or are listed on a tax return as a spouse or dependent. These taxpayers must file Form W-7, Application for Individual Taxpayer Identification Number and supply documentation that will establish foreign status and true identity. A federal tax return must be associated with all Form W-7 applications with exceptions as noted in the Form W-7 Instructions.
- Driver's licenses and passports are *not* acceptable substitutes for Social Security or ITIN cards.
- Taxpayers can get an instant benefit verification letter on the Social Security website using their *my Social Security* account.
- When preparing a return to include with a Form W-7 application, refer to the instructions in the Volunteer Resource Guide, Resident/NR Alien tab.

NOTE: Taxpayer spouse or dependent name and Social Security number mismatches are some of the most frequent errors in processing a tax return.

Learning Review

Filing Status

1: Bob is 27 years old. His gross income was \$17,000 during the tax year. Based only on this information, is he required to file a tax return?	Yes or No
2: Janet and Harry are married and usually file jointly. During the tax year, she turned 66 and he turned 64. Their gross income was \$19,800. Based only on this information, are they required to file a tax return?	Yes or No
3: Juanita has a dependent child and can file as a Qualifying Widow. She is 47 years old. Her gross income was \$25,000. Based only on this information, is she required to file a tax return?	Yes or No
4: It is the responsibility of the volunteer tax preparer to enter each Social Security number correctly on the tax return.	True False
5: A taxpayer wants to know about the Presidential Election Campaign Fund. Where can you find that information?	

Feedback:

Please email: selfstudy@aarpdfntaxaide.org. Appreciate suggestions and comments.

Answers to Learning Review

1: Yes, Bob is required to file a return.
2: No, Janet and Harry are not required to file.
3: Yes, Juanita must file.
4: True. To prevent processing delays, check the accuracy of each Social Security number you enter on the return, as well as the spelling of the name associated with the number.
5: The index in Pub 17 or Form 1040 Instructions.