



Rhode Island Department of Revenue

Division of Taxation

ADV 2024-06
Tax Administration

ADVISORY FOR TAXPAYERS
February 2, 2024

Free tax preparation software is available for many taxpayers

Free File offers may help most personal income tax filers

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – The Rhode Island Division of Taxation, in partnership with the Free File Alliance, reminds taxpayers that many Rhode Islanders qualify for the Free File program. The program allows filers to use name-brand tax preparation software to prepare and file their state and federal income taxes at no cost.

The federal and Rhode Island tax-filing seasons for Tax Year 2023 opened on January 29, 2024, and will close on April 15, 2024.^{1,2} Many Rhode Islanders making less than \$79,000 a year are eligible to benefit from Free File. To check your eligibility status, and participate in Free File, visit the Division's dedicated [Free File webpage](#).

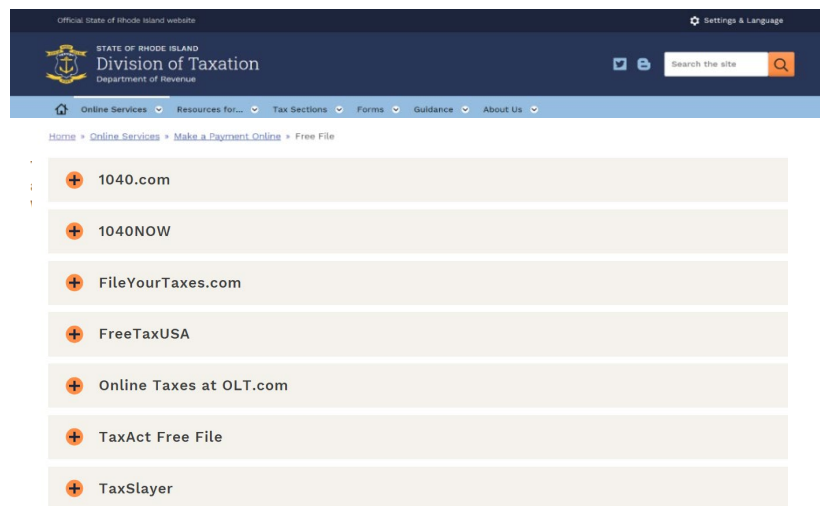
Eligible filers can prepare and electronically file their federal and Rhode Island personal income tax returns at no charge through the Free File links on the Division's Free File page. Please remember that the software must be accessed through the links on the Division's website for taxpayers to qualify for the free service.

Free File may be especially appealing to college students, young adults, first-time filers, and some young families. It can also be useful for seniors, retirees, people in the military, and others who qualify.

To use the Free File program:

1. Visit the Rhode Island Division of Taxation's Free File webpage.

- <https://tax.ri.gov/online-services/make-payment-online/free-file>



¹ See [Advisory 2024-03](#) for details.

² Taxpayers affected by the storms, tornadoes, and flooding that began on September 10, 2023, must reach out to the Division if these disasters impact their ability to timely file their taxes. See [Advisory 2024-05](#) for details.

2. Review the terms of each offer to see the ones for which you may be eligible.
 - You will see free offers displayed on the page from several well-known online tax preparation software companies.
3. Decide which of the offers best suits your circumstances.
4. Click on the link for that offer.
 - You will be directed to the company's Free File page.
 - You must access the software company's website through the dedicated Free File link on the Division's webpage. Otherwise, you will not be able to take advantage of the Free File offer and will be charged to use the software.
5. Prepare and file your taxes using helpful name-brand software.

The Division encourages taxpayers to keep the following points in mind:

- You must be eligible for the Free File program, and you must file both your federal and state returns via the same Free File software offer to avoid charges and fees.
- If you have already filed your federal return for tax year 2023 in any way, you will not be able to file your state return electronically on its own.
- There may be a charge to file your taxes using the software if you do not meet the qualifications under the Free File program.
- Before you begin the online tax-preparation and e-filing process, gather all records that you will need to file a complete and accurate return. These include:
 - Form W-2 wage statements;
 - Form 1099 statements;
 - Social Security numbers; and
 - Bank account information.
- Free File is a method of electronically filing. E-filing is the only method available for having your Rhode Island personal income tax refund deposited directly into your bank or credit union account. Direct deposit is not available for paper returns.
- The Free File offers listed on the Division's website are not produced or endorsed by the Rhode Island Division of Taxation. They are produced by private sector tax-preparation companies that have agreed to provide free online tax-preparation and e-filing services to those who qualify based on certain criteria. Taxpayers who utilize the Free File program should carefully read the details of each offer before beginning the tax-preparation and tax-filing process.

For some taxpayers that need more assistance, the IRS manages programs that provide free basic tax return preparation to qualified individuals. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs offer free basic tax return preparation to qualified individuals.

The VITA program has operated for over 50 years. VITA sites offer free tax help to people who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns, including:

- People who generally make \$64,000 or less;
- Persons with disabilities; and
- Limited English-speaking taxpayers.

The TCE program also offers free tax help, particularly for those who are 60 years of age and older. This assistance specializes in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors.

Rhode Island has a number of TCE and VITA volunteer tax preparation sites. To find a volunteer tax preparation site near you – including its location, hours, and dates of operation:

- Visit the IRS's VITA/TCE webpage, which has links for finding nearby volunteer tax preparation sites: <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-qualifying-taxpayers>;
- Call the United Way of Rhode Island's helpline at 211;
- Call the VITA program toll-free at 1-800-906-9887; or
- Call the AARP Foundation Tax-Aide program toll-free at 1-888-227-7669.

About Free File

Rhode Island is one of many states nationwide offering the Free File program to taxpayers. The free service is made possible from Free File, which is a partnership between the Internal Revenue Service, the Rhode Island Division of Taxation, other states, and the Free File Alliance.

The Free File Alliance is a group of industry-leading private-sector tax-preparation companies that have agreed to provide free commercial online tax-preparation and electronic filing.

The Rhode Island Division of Taxation, part of the Rhode Island Department of Revenue, is open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. business days. For more information, contact the Division of Taxation at (401) 574-8829 or see <https://tax.ri.gov/about-us/contact-us>.
