

Select Your Tax Return Preparer Wisely!

What most taxpayers do not realize is that no license is required to become a paid tax return preparer. Tax return preparers do not have to be licensed by the federal government or any state agency in order to prepare tax returns for a fee.

It is the taxpayers who are ultimately responsible for errors made on their tax returns even if the errors were made by the tax preparer.

As such, it is important to make sure that you choose a tax preparer who is a certified tax professional. A person who prepares tax returns for others should have a solid understanding of tax matters.

I have more questions!

If you have more questions about choosing a tax return preparer, please call the CLSMF Low Income Taxpayer Clinic toll free at **1-866-886-1799**.

How to Get Help

To find out if we can help,

call toll free

1-866-886-1799

Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida

BREVARD — (866) 469-7444

CITRUS & SUMTER

106 N. Osceola Ave.

Inverness, FL 34450

(352) 726-6592 — CITRUS

(800) 984-2918 — SUMTER

FLAGLER—(800) 405-1417

PUTNAM—(386) 385-0928

216 S. 6th St., Palatka, FL 32177

HERNANDO — (866) 801-5566

LAKE— (352) 343-6351

226 West Main St., Tavares, FL 32778

MARION— (352) 629-6257

2300 SE 17th St, Ocala, FL 34474

ORANGE — (407) 841-7777

122 E. Colonial Drive, Suite 200

Orlando, FL 32801

OSCEOLA — (407) 847-0053

800 North Main St., Kissimmee, FL 34744

SEMINOLE — (407) 322-6673

315 Magnolia Ave., Sanford, FL 32771

VOLUSIA — (386) 258-5600

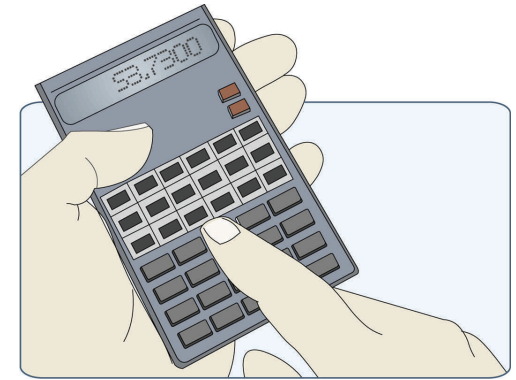
128 Orange Ave., Suite 100

Daytona Beach, FL 32114

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Tax Return Preparers



What you need to know to get legitimate tax advice.

Community Legal Services of Mid Florida Low Income Taxpayer Clinic

The Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) is funded by a grant from the Internal Revenue Service and in part by The Florida Bar Foundation with Interests on Trust Accounts Program funding.

Although the LITC receives funding from the IRS, the clinic and its employees are not affiliated with the IRS. A taxpayer's decision to use the LITC will not affect the taxpayer's rights before the IRS.



Signs that a tax preparer might not be legitimate:

- They tell you they can get bigger refunds than other tax preparers. Someone unfamiliar with your financial situation cannot make a guarantee like that.
- They base their fee on a percentage of the refund amount rather than the difficulty of preparing the tax return.
- They file schedules where information is fraudulent or lacks proper documentation to support the income or deductions.
- They refuse to sign the tax return as the paid preparer. The preparer is required by law to sign the return.
- They do not provide you with a copy of the final return for your records.
- They ask you to sign a blank return or to sign the return in pencil.
- The preparer is not properly licensed or registered.
- They delegate the task of preparing your return to someone in the office who is not qualified.
- They claim to have a “special” relationship with the IRS.

Check Credentials!

If you have concerns that your preparer might not be qualified, you can always check your preparer’s credentials to make certain that your preparer is licensed. In Florida, the licensing authorities are:

- **The Florida Bar** (for attorneys)
(850) 651-5839
- **The IRS** (for Enrolled Agents)
(313) 234-1280
- **Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation** (for CPAs)
www.myfloridalicense.com
(850) 487-1395

In Florida, there is no requirement that tax return preparers be licensed. That means that **anyone** can prepare tax returns—whether they are familiar with tax law or not. To be certain you are getting the best help possible, you should use an enrolled agent, a certified public accountant, or an attorney licensed with the organizations listed above.

Because Florida does not have a licensing requirement, you may also want to check with friends, co-workers, or your employer for help in selecting a "reputable" preparer.

Choose a preparer you will be able to contact in case your return is examined by the IRS and there are questions regarding how your return was prepared.

Remember, that although the preparer signs the return, you are responsible for the accuracy of every item on your return. Unscrupulous tax return preparers do exist and can cause considerable financial and legal problems for their clients by filing false income tax returns. Always be sure to **carefully review** the completed return before you sign it to be sure all tax information, including your name, address, and social security number is correct.

Get Your Taxes Prepared for Free!

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs will help you prepare and file your tax return for FREE. They can even help you file your return electronically. These volunteers undergo training before they are allowed to assist you with your tax preparation. You can contact the VITA program at 1-888-227-7669. You locate the closest TCE program by calling 1-800-829-1040.