Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Free File

What is Free File?
Free File is a free service that offers free federal tax preparation and e-file options for all taxpayers. Free File is made possible through the Free File Alliance, LLC, a public-private partnership between the IRS and commercial tax software companies. All taxpayers have a Free File option.

Who can use Free File?
Everyone can use IRS Free File. If your adjusted gross income was $58,000 or less in 2010, use brand-name software to do your taxes for free. If your income was more, use Free File Fillable Forms. Both options allow taxpayers to prepare and e-file their taxes for free.

Why should I use Free File?
Taxes can be, well, taxing. Free File does the hard work for you. There's no need for you to be a tax expert. Software provides step-by-step guidance. You get a more accurate tax return. It helps you get the tax credit and deductions you're due. And, you can transmit your return electronically for free with IRS e-file. Best of all, if you use e-file and select direct deposit, you can get your refund in as few as 10 days.

How do you get started?
To learn more about Free File and your free filing options, visit our website at freefile.IRS.gov. Once you're ready to file your federal taxes, you'll be directed to the IRS.gov Free File page at www.IRS.gov/freefile, where you can choose a company or let us help you choose which program is best suited to your needs.

Will Free File help me choose which program is best for me?
Yes. There are 20 software companies that participate in the Free File Alliance. Each company has unique offerings, so you can find the program that works best for you. Select "Help me choose a company" at www.IRS.gov/freefile. By answering a few simple questions, the IRS will narrow your options and direct you to the best software program for your situation.

Are there free state tax-filing options?
IRS Free File is for the preparation and filing of federal taxes. There are currently 21 states that offer free state tax preparation and filing options.

What is AGI?
Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) is the amount of household income after certain deductions. For a list of eligible deductions, please reference www.IRS.gov.

Free File Partner Toolkit–Nov. 2010

What information do I need before I get started?
Make sure you have your W-2s or 1099s plus records for any deductions. There is a full list of all documents and information you may need to complete your taxes available at www.IRS.gov.

What if this is my first-time filing federal taxes?
Free File is great for first-time filers. Software guides you, helps find tax breaks and e-files your federal return—all for free. Get started at www.IRS.gov/freefile.

What is e-file?
IRS e-file is the highly secure way to transmit your federal tax return to the IRS. It uses the latest encryption standards to safely and securely protect your personal data. Learn more about e-file at www.IRS.gov/efile.

Why should I e-file?
IRS e-file is the most popular way to transmit your tax return. More than 70 percent of taxpayers e-filed last year. It's safe and secure. It's more accurate. If you e-file and select direct deposit, you can get your refund in as few as 10 days. If you owe taxes, you can file now and pay by April 18. You should opt for e-file whether you use software or a paid tax preparer.

Is there contact information if I have additional questions?
For questions, please contact Nancy Mathis, Free File Brand Manager, at 202-622-3005, or e-mail Nancy.Mathis@irs.gov.

What is the Free File Alliance?
The Free File Alliance, LLC is a group of industry-leading, private-sector tax preparation companies that have agreed to meet the IRS' high standards for security and privacy and provide tax software options for free.*

The IRS does not endorse any individual Free File Alliance company. While the IRS manages the content of the Free File pages accessible on IRS.gov, it does not retain any taxpayer information entered on the Free File site.