



Frequently asked questions: PTIN application/renewal assistance

- [a. General Guidance About the PTIN Application Process](#)
 - [b. The PTIN Renewal Process](#)
 - [c. PTIN Fees/Payments](#)
 - [d. Password Problems and Other Logon Issues](#)
-

a. General guidance about the PTIN application process

1. I have a Social Security number, but have never filed a U.S. federal tax return, or my last return was filed more than four years ago. How do I obtain a PTIN? (updated Oct. 19, 2023)

If you are requesting a PTIN and have never filed a U.S. federal tax return, have not filed a U.S. federal tax return in the past four years, or do not have a U.S. federal income tax filing requirement, you can complete and submit your application online through your online PTIN account. From the main menu select the “Register for a PTIN” tile. Follow the online prompts to complete the application process.

If you prefer, you can register for a PTIN by submitting a paper Form W-12. You must submit an original or notarized copy of your Social Security card with an original or notarized copy of one other government-issued document that contains a current photo ID. Examples of acceptable supporting documents are listed below. All documents must be current original documents or notarized copies, and must verify your name. Refer to Form W-12 instructions for complete information regarding acceptable supporting documentation and application requirements.

Examples of acceptable supporting documents:

- Passport/Passport card

- Driver's license
- U.S. State ID card
- Military ID card
- National ID card

Send Form W-12 and supporting documentation to:

IRS Tax Pro PTIN Processing Center
PO Box 380638
San Antonio, TX 78268

Note: The IRS will accept original documents or notarized copies of documents. Original documents will be returned to the preparer at the mailing address shown on the Form W-12. Although the IRS will accept original documents, it is recommended that preparers submit copies of original documents in accordance with the requirements outlined below:

- **Notarized copies** - must be notarized by a U.S. notary public. The notary must see the valid, unaltered, original documents and verify that the copies conform to the original. You must submit the copy that bears the mark (stamp, signature, etc.) of the notary.

Note: Photocopies or faxes of notarized documents are not acceptable.

2. What format should I use when entering the address from my most recent Form 1040 return?

Enter your address exactly as it appears on your most recent tax return except for punctuation. Punctuation should be omitted.

3. What name should I use on the PTIN application? (updated Aug. 14, 2025)

You should use the name on your ID.me account (If you need to update your name, refer to the [name change FAQ](#).)

4. If my professional credential(s) do(es) not expire what should I put in the expiration date field? (updated Oct. 16, 2025)

If your professional credential(s) do not expire, you should enter Dec. 31 of the year for which you are applying or renewing your PTIN (e.g., 12/31/2026 if you are renewing your PTIN for 2026).

Note: Although many professional credentials have expiration dates, the IRS recognizes that several do not. If you do not know whether your professional credentials expire or the expiration date if they do expire, you should contact your credentialing organization to obtain the correct date.

Enrolled agents and enrolled retirement plan agents can contact the IRS Office Enrollment at [855-472-5540](tel:855-472-5540).

Enrolled actuaries should contact the Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries at nhqjbea@irs.gov .

Certified public accountants can find contact information for all state boards of accountancy at the [National Association of State Boards of Accountancy](#) .

Attorneys should contact their states' credentialing organizations.

5. How can I find my professional credential numbers?

Enrolled agents and enrolled retirement plan agents can contact the IRS Office Enrollment at [855-472-5540](tel:855-472-5540).

Enrolled actuaries should contact the Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries at nhqjbea@irs.gov .

Certified public accountants can find contact information for all state boards of accountancy at the [National Association of State Boards of Accountancy](#) .

Attorneys should contact their states' credentialing organizations.

6. Can you define tax compliance?

All PTIN applicants must attest they are compliant with their personal and business tax obligations, or provide an explanation if they are not.

For purposes of obtaining a PTIN, an individual is in tax compliance if 1) all individual and business returns that are due have been filed (or an extension requested) and 2) all taxes that are due have been paid (or acceptable payment arrangements have been established).

7. Will bankruptcy affect my ability to practice?

Bankruptcy generally will not affect a PTIN application. A balance due account with the IRS that is in bankruptcy status will not result in a preparer failing the tax compliance test. But, for an account to be in bankruptcy status, the taxpayer must have included the IRS debt in the bankruptcy filing.

8. Why wasn't I re-issued the same PTIN I already have?

Before assigning a new PTIN, the system checks whether a previous PTIN was in active status for the same social security number. If so, the same number is reassigned.

There are numerous reasons a preparer's previous PTIN might not have been in active status. The most common was that the preparer did not reply to a request for additional information about their PTIN application. In previous years, PTINs were auto-generated to preparers who applied using e-Services. However, if information did not match IRS records or was missing from the application, a follow-up request was sent. If the preparer did not reply, the PTIN was never placed in active status.

Once a new PTIN is assigned, it is not possible to have a prior PTIN re-issued. Be sure to use the newly assigned PTIN on all returns and not the previous PTIN.

9. I believe that my PTIN has been compromised and someone else is using it to prepare returns. How do I report this?

Use [Form 14157](#) [PDF](#) to report misuse. Be sure to include any information you have regarding the person or entity that may be using your PTIN.

10. How can I update my PTIN account information (I've moved, obtained a new tax professional credential, changed my place of business, have a new email address, etc.)? (updated Aug. 14, 2025)

If you need to change your name, refer to the [name change FAQ](#).

PTIN holders with an [online account](#) can update most information online. After logging into the account:

Click the “Edit Account Information” tile and select the item to update. Updates are allowed to the following information:

- User ID
- Password
- Personal Mailing Address
- Phone Number
- Business Name, Address, Phone Number and Business Web Site Address
- Self-Employed Attestation
- Employment Identification Number (EIN)
- Centralized Authorization File (CAF) number
- Electronic Filing Identification Number (EFIN)
- Professional Credentials (Credential Type, Jurisdiction, Credential Number and Expiration Date)

You will receive an Account Change Notification by email confirming that changes were made to your online PTIN account. Allow up to 24 hours to receive this notification.

b. The PTIN renewal process

1. When do I need to renew my PTIN each year? (updated Oct. 19, 2023)

All PTINs expire on Dec. 31 of each year and are required to be renewed to be current and active. PTIN renewal open season begins mid-October each year for the following year. You can renew online by logging into your PTIN account or by submitting a paper Form W-12 with the “Renewal” box checked.

Online renewal takes about 15 minutes, but paper renewals take 6 weeks to process.

2. I don't see an option to renew on the PTIN system. (updated Feb. 13, 2023)

You must log into your original PTIN account and select "Renew my PTIN" from the main menu. Do not create a new account. If you do not remember your User ID or password from your original PTIN account, select "Forgot User ID" or "Forgot Password" from the Login page and follow the steps provided.

If renewal season is underway but your account does not have a "Renew my PTIN" option on the main menu, you should contact the [PTIN Information Line](#).

3. I'm getting a duplicate SSN message when I try to renew. (updated Aug. 14, 2025)

- A duplicate SSN message is caused by trying to create a new PTIN application when one already exists.
- If you obtained your PTIN via a paper W-12 originally and are trying to renew your PTIN online, you need an activation code to link your existing PTIN to your online account. These are sent in the mail each fall during renewal season. If you did not receive the letter or if it has expired, call the PTIN information line to request a replacement.
- If you applied and received a PTIN using the online system last year you need to ensure that when you log-in your PTIN is displayed on the right-hand side of the screen. If you are logged into the correct account, your PTIN will be displayed on the right side of the screen and you will see a "Renew my PTIN" tile on the main menu.

4. I am no longer preparing tax returns for compensation and am not an enrolled agent. Do I need to notify the IRS? (updated May 31, 2022)

If you do not plan to prepare any returns for compensation in the future, it is not necessary to notify the IRS. You can let your PTIN expire.

If there is a possibility you may prepare returns for compensation again in future years, you should place your PTIN in voluntary inactive status. This function is available by clicking the "Edit Account Information" tile of your online PTIN account and selecting "Inactivate my PTIN", under the "Account Actions" section. **Note:** This function allows individuals who take a full calendar year off from return preparation to more easily reactivate and renew their PTIN in a later year. If you are paid to prepare tax returns during any part of a year or you are an enrolled agent, you must have an active PTIN.

PTIN holders are ineligible to prepare returns for compensation during the period of inactivity.

5. I have placed my PTIN into a voluntary inactive status. How do I reactivate my PTIN? (updated June 2, 2022)

Log into your PTIN account. Select the "Edit Account Information" tile. Then under the "Account Actions" section select "Reactivate my PTIN". Follow the prompts to update your information and complete the process.

This function will allow you to reactive and renew your PTIN, permitting you to begin tax preparation again.

6. My PTIN has been in an expired status for more than one calendar year. Do I need to submit a renewal application for the prior year/s? (updated Oct. 19, 2023)

If your PTIN has been expired for more than a full calendar year, you must renew for each previously expired year during which you prepared returns or were an enrolled agent. If your PTIN has been inactive or expired for more than three consecutive years, you must submit a new registration application.

You can renew online by logging into your online PTIN account. From the main menu select the “Renew my PTIN” tile and follow the prompts to complete all applicable applications. You will be asked to attest whether or not returns were prepared during the expired year. If preferred, you may submit a paper Form W-12 for prior-year renewals. You must list each year that you wish to renew on the Form W-12.

Submit Form W-12 by mail to:

IRS Tax Pro PTIN Processing Center
PO Box 380638
San Antonio, TX 78268

Online renewal takes about 15 minutes to process while paper renewals take 6 weeks to process.

c. PTIN fees/payments

1. Is there a fee to renew my PTIN? (updated Oct 16, 2025)

Yes. The fee to renew or obtain a PTIN is \$18.75 for 2026. The fee is set at \$10 per application or renewal (plus an \$8.75 fee payable to the third-party contractor).

Note: The fee for 2021–2025 is \$19.75. There is no PTIN fee for years prior to 2021.

2. Does the IRS refund PTIN payments?

PTIN application fees are **non-refundable**.

3. Do all enrolled agents, attorneys and CPAs have to pay the fee to obtain/renew a PTIN in addition to their other fees? (updated Oct. 19, 2023)

Yes. All paid tax return preparers must have a PTIN. The PTIN fee is in addition to any fee that paid tax return preparers must pay for any other certifications or licenses they hold.

4. Can one payment be sent with multiple paper Forms W-12 submitted together? (updated Oct. 19, 2023)

No, you must submit a separate check or money order for each calendar year. Indicate the calendar year you intend the PTIN payment for on each check or money order.

d. Password problems and other logon issues

1. What if I can't find my temporary password in my email box? (updated Aug. 14, 2025)

Check your junk or spam folder. If the email is not received in your regular or junk folder, you should update your security filter to allow emails from taxpros@ptin.irs.gov. To generate a new temporary email password, go back into the system and click on “Forgot your password? Click here.”

Note: taxpros@ptin.irs.gov is not an active email address. You cannot send messages to this address. (If you already linked your PTIN to your ID.me account, refer to [Help.ID.me](#) )

2. When I try to log-in I see a message stating "Please enter a valid user ID and password." (updated Feb. 13, 2023)

You have received this error because either your User ID or password are incorrect. The information entered must match the User ID and password you created if you registered online.

Solutions:

1. Click the Forgot User ID link on the PTIN account Login screen to have your User ID emailed to you.
2. Click the Forgot Password link on the PTIN account login screen to have a link emailed to you to reset your password.

If you have forgotten both your User ID and password, click Forgot User ID first, then click Forgot Password.

3. I can't remember my User ID for my PTIN account. (updated Aug. 14, 2025)

1. Most preparers use their email address for their User ID. It is the default User ID.
2. If you are unable to remember your User ID, go to the PTIN account Login screen. Click the “Forgot User ID” link on the screen.
3. Once you enter the email address an email will be sent containing your User ID.
4. If you do not receive your email within 24 hours, check the “Junk” or “Spam” folder of your email account.

Note: (If you already linked your PTIN to your ID.me account, refer to [Help.ID.me](#) )

4. I can't remember the Password to my PTIN account. (updated Aug. 14, 2025)

Follow these instructions to create a new PTIN account password:

1. Go to the PTIN account Login screen and click the “Forgot Password” link on the screen.
2. Enter the email address associated with your online account to have a link sent to reset your password.
3. Confirm the email address entered and submit.
4. If you do not receive your email, check the “Junk” or “Spam” folder of your email account.
5. Once you receive your email, click the link and follow the steps on the screens to reset your password. The link will expire after 12 hours.
6. Carefully note your User ID and password for future reference.

Note: (If you already linked your PTIN to your ID.me account, refer to [Help.ID.me](#) )

5. I’ve forgotten or no longer have access to the email address used to create my online account. (updated Aug. 14, 2025)

Contact the PTIN Information Line at 877-613-7846 during operating hours (Monday – Friday, 8:00am – 5:00pm CST).

Note: (If you already linked your PTIN to your ID.me account, refer to [Help.ID.me](#) )