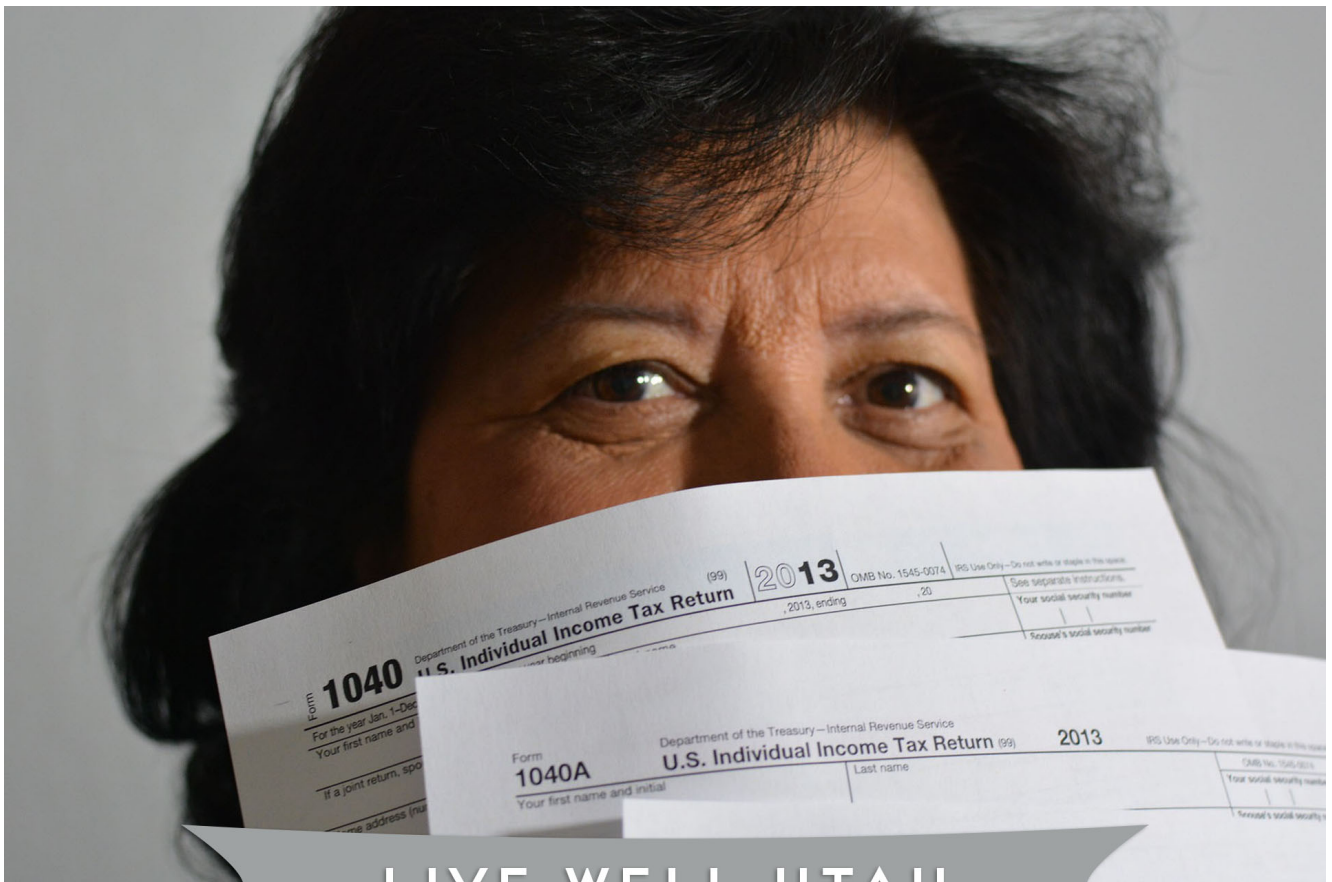


Free Help Filing Your Taxes



LIVE WELL UTAH

ASK AN EXPERT: FREE HELP FILING YOUR TAXES

Have you filed your taxes yet this year? There's a reason so many people opt to hire someone else to do their taxes for them— it can be a daunting task! Doing them yourself is a good way to save a little money. Read on to learn about free programs to help you get them done.

Now that you have received your W-2 s, are you getting ready to prepare your taxes?

Before you **pay a tax preparer, pay for a tax anticipation loan** or **buy a commercial tax preparation program**, look into these two **free** opportunities for completing your taxes. There is a free service available to Utah citizens through the VITA program if your income is \$54,000 or less. You can go to utahtaxhelp.org. Click on Find a VITA site to find out if there is a free site in your area where trained volunteers can assist you in preparing your tax return and you can apply for earned income tax credits, if you are eligible. You can also call 211 and they can help you find a location in the Salt Lake City area and make an appointment. If you need to file back taxes, you can also check to see if they can assist you with that process.

If your income is \$66,000 or less, you can file online for free. This online service is also available at utahtaxhlp.org. Click on File online for free now. You can also access the program by going to myfreetaxes.com. Don't be alarmed that the information indicates it is brought to you by H&R Block and United Way; it is still free.

Just think, by doing your taxes for free, any tax return you receive can be used for creating that emergency fund, paying off some bills, starting a college savings plan for your kids or planning for a vacation. Happy saving in 2018!

This article was written by Marilyn Albertson, Utah State University Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Associate Professor, Salt Lake County