

# KNOW

## BEFORE YOU HIRE A **TAX PREPARER**

Be careful when selecting a licensed tax preparation business to prepare your tax return.

- ✔ **Look for a City of Chicago Business License** prominently displayed and visible to the customers.
- ✔ **A "tax preparer" does not include:**
  1. An attorney-at-law, and the employees of an attorney-at-law, who is a tax preparer;
  2. A certified public accountant, and the employees of a certified public accountant, who is a tax preparer;
  3. An officer or employee of a federal, state, or local governmental agency who provides tax preparation services in the scope of his employment; or
  4. An administrator, conservator, guardian, executor, trustee, receiver or other representative appointed by the court who provides tax preparation services in the scope of that appointment.
- ✔ **Check the Preparer's History.** Check with the Better Business Bureau to see if the preparer has a questionable history and how they are rated.
- ✔ **Make Sure the Preparer is Available.** Make sure you will be able to contact the tax preparer after you file your return, even after the April 15 due date. This may be helpful in the event questions arise about your tax return.
- ✔ **Avoid Large Refund Claims.** Be wary of any preparers who claim they can obtain larger refunds than other preparers.
- ✔ **Check the Preparer's Qualifications.** All paid tax return preparers are required to have a Preparer Tax Identification Number from the IRS.
- ✔ **Know Your Rights.** Avoid preparers who don't provide you with an estimate of the cost of services and a Consumer Bill of Rights before you use their services. A copy of the Consumer Bill of Rights can be found in English and Spanish at [www.cityofchicago.org/BACP](http://www.cityofchicago.org/BACP).
- ✔ **Find a Free Tax Preparer.** The City of Chicago has partnered with the Center for Economic Progress and Ladder Up to support eligible families and individuals who cannot afford professional tax preparation services. Visit [www.taxprepchicago.org](http://www.taxprepchicago.org) to find the nearest free tax preparation site.

**Report** abusive tax preparers to **Business Affairs and Consumer Protection** by calling **311** or visiting [www.cityofchicago.org/BACP](http://www.cityofchicago.org/BACP).



**Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection**  
City Hall, 121 North LaSalle Street, Room 805, Chicago, IL 60602