



Publication 36

General Information for Senior Citizens and Retired Persons

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Introduction

This publication provides general tax information that may be of special interest to senior citizens and retired persons. It will help you determine if you need to file a New York State personal income tax return.

As a senior citizen or a retired person filing a New York State income tax return, you may qualify for special income tax benefits that can reduce your tax liability. These benefits include subtraction modifications that will reduce your New York State adjusted gross income, and tax credits that may decrease your tax due or increase your refund.

If you do not have to file a New York State income tax return, you may still be eligible to claim a refund of certain credits (see *New York tax credits* on page 16).

See the *Need help?* section on the back cover of this publication or visit the [Tax Department Web site](#) for information on how to get assistance. For federal income tax information, visit the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Web site (www.irs.gov) or call 1 800 829-1040.

Resident status

You need to determine if you are a resident, nonresident, or part-year resident before you can decide if you need to file a New York State return.

To determine your resident status, you have to consider where your *domicile* was and where you maintained a *permanent place of abode* during the tax year.

Domicile – In general, your domicile is the place that you intend to have as your permanent home. Your domicile is, in effect, where your permanent home is located. It is the place you intend to return to after being away (as on vacation abroad, business assignment, education leave, or military assignment).

You can have only **one** domicile. Your New York domicile does not change until you can demonstrate that you have abandoned your New York domicile and established a new permanent domicile outside New York State.

A change of domicile must be *clear and convincing*. Easily controlled factors such as where you vote, where your driver's license and registration are issued, or where your will is located are **not** primary factors in establishing domicile.

To determine whether you have, in fact, changed your domicile, you should compare:

- the size, value, and nature of use of your first residence to the size, value, and nature of use of your newly acquired residence;

- your employment and/or business connections in both locations;
- the amount of time spent in both locations;
- the physical location of items that have significant sentimental value to you in both locations; and
- your close family ties in both locations.

A change of domicile is **clear and convincing** only when your primary ties are clearly **greater** in the new location. When weighing your primary ties, keep in mind that some may weigh more heavily than others, depending upon your overall lifestyle. If required by the Tax Department, it is the taxpayer's responsibility to produce documentation showing the necessary intention to effect a change of domicile.

If you move to a new location but intend to stay there only for a limited amount of time (no matter how long), your domicile does not change.

Permanent place of abode – In general, a permanent place of abode is a residence (a building or structure where a person can live) that you permanently maintain, whether you own it or not, that is suitable for year-round use, and usually includes a residence your spouse owns or leases.

Resident

You are a New York State resident for income tax purposes if:

- Your domicile is not New York State but you maintain a permanent place of abode in New York State for more than 11 months of the year and spend **184 days or more** (a part of a day is a day for this purpose) in New York State during the tax year.

Note: If you maintain a permanent place of abode in New York State but are claiming to be a nonresident for tax purposes, you must be able to provide adequate records to substantiate that you did not spend more than 183 days of the tax year in New York State. However, if you are a member of the armed forces, different rules may apply.

- Your domicile is New York State. However, even if your domicile is New York, you are not a resident if you meet **all three** of the conditions in either Group A or Group B as follows:

Group A

- 1) You did not maintain any permanent place of abode in New York State during the tax year; and
- 2) You maintained a permanent place of abode outside New York State during the entire tax year; and
- 3) You spent **30 days or less** (a part of a day is a day for this purpose) in New York State during the tax year.

Group B

- 1) You were in a foreign country for at least 450 days (a part of a day is a day for this purpose) during any period of 548 consecutive days; and
- 2) You, your spouse (unless legally separated) and minor children spent **90 days or less** (a part of a day is a day for this purpose) in New York State during this 548-day period; and
- 3) During the nonresident portion of the tax year in which the 548-day period begins, and during the nonresident portion of the tax year in which the 548-day period ends, you were present in New York State for no more than the number of days which bears the same ratio to 90 as the number of days in such portion of the tax year bears to 548. The following formula illustrates this condition:

$$\frac{\text{Number of days in the nonresident portion}}{548} \times 90 = \text{Maximum number of days allowed in New York State}$$

Nonresident

You are a New York State nonresident if you were not a resident of New York State for any part of the year.

Part-year resident

You are a New York State part-year resident if you meet the definition of resident or nonresident for only part of the year.

Filing requirements

There are different filing requirements for residents, nonresidents, and part-year residents.

Resident – If you are a New York State resident you must file [Form IT-201](#), *Resident Income Tax Return*, if you meet any of the following conditions:

- You have to file a federal return.
- You did not have to file a federal return but your federal adjusted gross income plus New York additions was more than \$4,000 (\$3,100 if you are single and can be claimed as a dependent on another taxpayer's federal return).
- You want to claim a refund of any New York State, New York City, or Yonkers income taxes withheld from your pay.
- You want to claim any of the refundable or carryover credits available.

Do not file Form IT-201 if you were a New York State resident for only part of the year. If you moved into New York State on any day other than January 1, or moved out of New York State on any day other than December 31, see *Part-year resident* above.

You may have additional filing responsibilities if you are a [New York City or Yonkers resident or part-year resident, or you have Yonkers income](#).

For more information, visit the Tax Department Web site or see the [instructions for Form IT-201](#).

Nonresident – If you are a New York State nonresident you must file [Form IT-203](#), *Nonresident and Part-Year Resident Income Tax Return*, if you meet any of the following conditions:

- You are a nonresident with [New York source income](#) and your New York adjusted gross income exceeds your New York standard deduction.
- You want to claim a refund of any New York State, New York City, or Yonkers income taxes withheld from your pay.
- You want to claim any of the refundable or carryover credits available.
- You had a net operating loss for New York State personal income tax purposes for the tax year, without having a similar net operating loss for federal income tax purposes.

You may have additional filing responsibilities if you have Yonkers income.

For more information, visit the Tax Department Web site or see the [instructions for Form IT-203](#).

Part-year resident – If you are a New York State part-year resident you must file [Form IT-203](#), *Nonresident and Part-Year Resident Income Tax Return*, if you meet any of the following conditions:

- You are a part-year resident with any income during your resident period or you had [New York source income](#) during your nonresident period and your New York adjusted gross income exceeds your New York standard deduction.
- You want to claim a refund of any New York State, New York City, or Yonkers income taxes withheld from your pay.
- You want to claim any of the refundable or carryover credits available.
- You are a part-year resident and you are subject to a separate tax on any lump-sum distributions for your resident period derived from or connected with New York sources.
- You had a net operating loss for New York State personal income tax purposes for the tax year, without having a similar net operating loss for federal income tax purposes.

You may have additional filing responsibilities if you are a New York City or Yonkers part-year resident, or you have Yonkers income.

For more information, visit the Tax Department Web site or see the [instructions for Form IT-203](#).

Nonresident recipients of pension income

Income from pension plans described in section 114 of Title 4 of the U.S. code received while a nonresident of New York State is not New York source income and should not be included in the *New York State amount* column on [Form IT-203](#), *Nonresident and Part-Year Resident Income Tax Return*.

The plans described in section 114 of Title 4 of the U.S. Code are as follows:

- A qualified trust under section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) that is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of the IRC. These qualified plans are the regular type of plans maintained by employers to provide retirement benefits to employees. They include both defined contribution and defined benefit plans. In addition to regular employee plans, also included in this category are Keogh (HR-10) plans for self-employed persons and section 401(k) deferred compensation plans.
- A simplified employee pension (SEP) defined in section 408(k) of the IRC. These are plans under which employers, including self-employed individuals, contribute to Individual Retirement Accounts on behalf of their employees.
- An annuity plan described in section 403(a) of the IRC. These plans are basically the equivalent of *qualified plans*, but they are funded by annuity contracts.
- An annuity contract described in section 403(b) of the IRC. These are tax sheltered annuities which utilize insurance contracts to fund a special type of pension arrangement available only to employees of public educational organizations (such as public schools) and certain other tax-exempt organizations.
- An individual retirement plan described in section 7701(a)(37) of the IRC. These plans are Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs), including Roth IRAs.
- An eligible deferred compensation plan as defined in section 457 of the IRC. These are plans set up by state and local governments and any other tax exempt organizations which permit employees, subject to certain limits, to contribute pre-tax dollars to the plans.
- A governmental plan as defined in section 414(d) of the IRC. These are plans established for its employees by the government of the

United States, or a state or political subdivision of a state, or any agency or instrumentality of the United States or any state.

- A trust described in section 501(c)(18) of the IRC. These are trusts created before June 25, 1959, that are part of a pension plan meeting special requirements and funded only by contributions of employees.
- Any plan, program, or arrangement described in section 3121(v)(2)(C) of the IRC, or any plan, program, or arrangement that is in writing, that provides for retirement payments in recognition of prior service to be made to a retired partner, and that is in effect immediately before retirement begins, provided the retirement payments are part of a series of substantially equal periodic payments (which may include income from plans described above) made for:
 - (a) the life or life expectancy of the recipient (or for the joint lives or joint life expectancies of the recipient and the designated beneficiary of the recipient); or
 - (b) a period of not less than 10 years.

However, a plan described above that is created solely to provide retirement benefits to employees that would exceed the benefits that could be provided to employees under a *qualified plan* (commonly referred to as *excess benefit plans*) is not subject to the periodic payment requirements set forth in (a) and (b) previously. These plans will qualify as covered plans regardless of the payout period or the method (lump-sum, etc.) in which the payments are made.

This provision relates to nonqualified deferred compensation arrangements. They are plans that are not recognized as *qualified* under the IRC. These are unlimited, flexible arrangements without contribution limits, funding requirements, or limits on payment provisions. These plans are often unfunded.

The fact that payments may be adjusted from time to time pursuant to the plan, program, or arrangement to limit total disbursements under a predetermined formula, or to provide cost of living or similar adjustments, will not cause the periodic payments provided under the plan, program or arrangement to fail the *substantially equal periodic payments* test.

For purposes of this section, the term *retired partner* is an individual who is described as a partner in section 7701(a)(2) of the IRC of 1986 and who is retired under such individual's partnership agreement.

- Any retirement or retainer pay of a member or former member of a uniformed service computed under Chapter 71 (Computation of

Retired Pay) of Title 10 (Armed Forces) of the United States Code. *Uniformed forces* means the armed forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corp, and Coast Guard), the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service.

If you receive pension income that is **not** included in one of the plans previously described and that income is derived from a business, trade, profession, or occupation previously carried on in New York, it must be included in the *New York State amount* column of Form IT-203. However, you are entitled to the pension and annuity income exclusion of up to \$20,000 if you meet the conditions described in this publication under *Pension and annuity income exclusion* on page 13.

New York State subtraction modifications

Certain tax benefits are provided to senior citizens and retired persons in the form of subtraction modifications. Subtraction modifications relate to certain items of income that are included in your federal adjusted gross income on your federal income tax return that may be subtracted out when computing your New York adjusted gross income.

The following sections describe certain New York subtraction modifications that may be of special interest to senior citizens and retired persons. For a complete list of New York subtraction modifications, see the [instructions for Form IT-225, New York State Modifications](#).

Social security and equivalent railroad retirement benefits

Social security benefits and Tier 1 railroad retirement benefits that are included in federal adjusted gross income are exempt from state and local income taxes and may be subtracted from your federal adjusted gross income when computing your New York adjusted gross income.

Railroad retirement benefits

If you included in your federal adjusted gross income either:

- supplemental annuity or Tier 2 benefits received under the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974, **or**
- benefits received under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act, **and**
- those benefits are exempt from state income taxes under Title 45 of the United States Code,

you may subtract the amount of those benefits from your federal adjusted gross income when computing your New York adjusted gross income.

Pensions of New York State, local governments, and the federal government

Qualified pension benefits or distributions received by officers and employees of the United States, New York State, and local governments within New York State, are exempt from New York State, New York City, and Yonkers income taxes. This subtraction modification is allowed regardless of the age of the taxpayer or of the form the payment(s) take.

This subtraction modification is allowed for a pension or distribution amount (to the extent the pension or other distribution was included in your federal adjusted gross income), including a distribution from a pension plan which represents a return of contribution in a year prior to retirement, as an officer, employee, or beneficiary of an officer or an employee of:

- The United States, its territories, possessions (or political subdivisions thereof), or any agency, instrumentality of the United States (including the military), or the District of Columbia.
- New York State including, the State and City Universities of New York and the New York State Education Department, who belongs to the Optional Retirement Program. (Note: Optional Retirement Program members may only subtract that portion attributable to employment with the State or City University of New York or the New York State Education Department.)
- Certain public authorities, including: the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Police 20-Year Retirement Program; the Manhattan and Bronx Surface Transit Operating Authority (MABSTOA); and the Long Island Railroad Company (LIRR).
- Local governments within the state, including, but not limited to:
 - New York State (NYS) Teachers' Retirement System;
 - New York City (NYC) Teachers' Retirement System;
 - NYC Teachers' Retirement IRC 403(b) plan;
 - International Union of Operating Engineers Local 891 Annuity Fund (Department of Education of the NYC School District);
 - NYC Superior Officers' Council Annuity Trust Fund;
 - NYC Correction Captains' Association Annuity Fund;
 - NYC Detectives' Endowment Association Annuity Fund;
 - City University of New York (CUNY) Civil Service Forum Annuity Fund;
 - Sergeants Benevolent Association of the City of New York Annuity Fund; and
 - NYC variable supplemental funds (VSF), including:
 - Transit Police Officers' VSF,
 - Transit Police Superior Officers' VSF,
 - Housing Police Officers' VSF,
 - Housing Police Superior Officers' VSF,
 - Police Officers' VSF,
 - Police Superior Officers' VSF,
 - Firefighters' VSF,
 - Fire Officers' VSF,
 - Corrections Officers' VSF,
 - Corrections Captain and Above VSF.

Distributions received from a New York State or local pension plan or from a federal government pension plan as a **nonemployee spouse** in accordance with a court-issued qualified domestic relations order (QDRO) that meets the criteria of Internal Revenue Code (IRC) section 414(p)(1)(A) or in accordance with a domestic relations order (DRO) issued by a New York court retain their character as pension income. Therefore, if you receive distributions from a New York State or local pension plan or a federal government pension plan as the result of a DRO or QDRO, you are allowed the subtraction modification to the extent that the distributions are included in your federal adjusted gross income.

If you received pension and annuity income as the **beneficiary** of a deceased officer or employee of the United States, New York State, or local government within New York State, you may also make this subtraction to the extent that the distributions are included in your federal adjusted gross income.

Pension and annuity income exclusion

If you were age 59½ or older for the entire tax year, you may exclude up to \$20,000 of your qualified pension and annuity income from your federal adjusted gross income for purposes of determining your New York adjusted gross income. If you became age 59½ during the tax year, the exclusion is allowed only for the amount of pension and annuity income received on or after you became 59½, but not more than \$20,000. Qualified pension and annuity income includes:

- periodic payments for services you performed as an employee before you retired;
- periodic and lump-sum payments from an IRA attributable to compensation for personal services, but **not** payments derived from contributions made after you retired that are not attributable to compensation for personal services;
- periodic distributions from an annuity contract (IRC section 403(b)) purchased by an employer for an employee, and the employer is a corporation, community chest fund, foundation or public school;
- periodic payments from an HR-10 (Keogh) plan, but **not** payments derived from contributions made after you retired;
- lump-sum payments from an HR-10 (Keogh) plan, but only if federal [Form 4972, Tax on Lump Sum Distributions](#), is not used. Do **not** include that part of your payment that was derived from contributions made after you retired;
- periodic distributions from deferred compensation plans sponsored by state and local governments and tax-exempt organizations (under IRC section 457); and
- periodic distributions of benefits from a cafeteria plan (IRC section 125) or a qualified cash or deferred profit-sharing or stock bonus plan (IRC section 401(k)), but **not** distributions derived from contributions made after you retired.

The exclusion also applies to pension and annuity income received by an estate or trust if the income meets the requirements as described above.

Qualified pension and annuity income does **not** include:

- Distributions received from a nongovernment pension plan as a **nonemployee spouse** in accordance with a court-issued qualified domestic relations order (QDRO) or in accordance with a domestic relations order (DRO) issued by a New York court.
- Distributions received as a result of an **annuity contract** purchased with your own funds from an insurance company or other financial institution. The payments are attributable to premium payments made by you, from your own funds, and are not attributable to personal services performed.

Married taxpayers who both receive pension income are each entitled to a maximum pension and annuity income exclusion of \$20,000 whether they file jointly or separately. However, you cannot claim any unused portion of your spouse's exclusion. If you receive your own pension income and your deceased spouse's pension income, you are entitled to a maximum pension and annuity exclusion of \$20,000 each year.

If you receive pension and annuity income of a deceased individual, you may take this subtraction (to the extent the distributions are included in your federal adjusted gross income), regardless of your age, if the deceased would have been entitled to it had the deceased continued to live. If the deceased individual would have become 59½ during the tax year, you may subtract from your federal adjusted gross income the amount of pension and annuity income received on or after the date that the deceased individual would have become 59½, but not more than \$20,000. In addition, the amount of pension and annuity income exclusion attributable to the deceased individual that you are eligible to claim as a beneficiary for the tax year must first be reduced by the amount subtracted on the deceased individual's New York State income tax return, if any, for the same tax year.

If the deceased individual has more than one beneficiary, the \$20,000 maximum amount of the pension and annuity exclusion must be allocated among the beneficiaries. Each beneficiary's share of the \$20,000 exclusion is determined by multiplying \$20,000 by a fraction whose numerator is the value of the pensions and annuities inherited by the beneficiary, and whose denominator is the total value inherited by all beneficiaries of the deceased individual's pensions and annuities. **The total exclusion of the deceased individual and all beneficiaries cannot exceed \$20,000 annually.**

Example 1: A decedent, who was age 65 at the time of death, received pension income of \$9,000 during the tax year. Two beneficiaries inherited equal portions (50%) of the decedent's pension during the same tax year and each beneficiary received a \$7,000 distribution from the pension.

The decedent's tax return filed for the year of death shows \$9,000 of pension income included in the decedent's federal adjusted gross income. Therefore, the decedent is allowed a pension exclusion of \$9,000.

The beneficiaries must allocate the remaining pension exclusion of \$11,000 (\$20,000 – \$9,000) in the same ratio (50%) as the total original inheritance is shared. Therefore, each beneficiary's maximum pension exclusion attributable to the decedent's pension is limited to \$5,500 (50% X \$11,000).

Example 2: Two beneficiaries receive an inheritance of a decedent's IRA and pension. At the time of inheritance, the value of the IRA and the pension is \$100,000 and \$400,000 respectively. Beneficiary A inherited 50% of the decedent's IRA (\$50,000) and 75% of the pension account (\$300,000) for a total of \$350,000. Beneficiary B inherited 50% of the decedent's IRA (\$50,000) and 25% of the pension account (\$100,000) for a total of \$150,000.

The decedent would have been allowed the pension exclusion provided under the Tax Law if the decedent had continued to live. However, the decedent had not taken any distributions from the IRA or pension at the time of death. Regardless of the amount of the distribution each beneficiary takes each year, if any, the beneficiaries must allocate the maximum exclusion in the same ratio as the total original inheritance is shared so that the total exclusion of all beneficiaries does not exceed \$20,000.

Beneficiary A's maximum pension exclusion attributable to the decedent's IRA and pension is limited to \$14,000 annually, calculated as follows:

- $\$350,000/\$500,000 = 70\%$
- $70\% \times \$20,000 = \$14,000$

Beneficiary B's maximum pension exclusion attributable to the decedent's IRA and pension is limited to \$6,000 annually, calculated as follows:

- $\$150,000/\$500,000 = 30\%$
- $30\% \times \$20,000 = \$6,000$

The **maximum exclusion** allowable, from the total of all sources that qualify for the exclusion, may not exceed \$20,000.

Example 3: *John, age 60, receives an annual pension distribution of \$15,000 from his own pension. John is also the sole beneficiary of a decedent's pension and receives a distribution of \$25,000 from that pension. (The decedent was over age 59 ½ and would have been entitled to the pension and annuity income exclusion had the decedent continued to live. However, the decedent had not taken any pension distribution at the time of death.)*

John includes the total \$40,000 of pension distributions in his federal adjusted gross income for the tax year. The maximum pension and annuity income exclusion John is allowed for the tax year is \$20,000.

If you have **disability income** that qualifies for the disability income exclusion and pension and annuity income that also qualifies for the exclusion, the total exclusion combined cannot exceed \$20,000. (See [Form IT-221, Disability Income Exclusion](#), for more information.)

Long-term residential care deduction

If you are a resident in a qualified continuing-care retirement community, you may be allowed a subtraction from federal adjusted gross income when computing your New York adjusted gross income for the portion of fees paid during the year that is attributable to the cost of providing long-term benefits under a continuing care contract. The amount of the subtraction is determined based on the fees paid for long-term benefits and your age. If you are married, file a joint return, and you and your spouse both qualify, you may each claim the subtraction. However, you may not claim any unused part of your spouse's subtraction.

A continuing-care retirement community is **qualified** if it has been issued a certificate of authority by the New York State Department of Health to operate as a continuing-care community.

Note: A long-term care insurance credit is also available (see *Long-term care insurance credit* on page 19).

New York tax credits

You may be able to reduce your income tax liability by claiming certain tax credits. If you are not required to file a New York State income tax return, you may still qualify to claim a refund of the real property tax credit, the New York City enhanced real property tax credit, and the New York City school tax credit. Some of the available income tax credits that may be of special interest to senior citizens and retired persons are identified below. For information on other New York State and New York City income tax credits, visit our Web site.

Child and dependent care credit

If you qualify to claim the federal child and dependent care credit, you can claim the New York State child and dependent care credit (whether or not

you actually claimed the federal credit). The New York State credit is based on a percentage of the federal credit.

Full-year and part-year New York City residents may also qualify for the New York City child and dependent care credit (see the [instructions for Form IT-216, Claim for Child and Dependent Care Credit](#)).

If you did not file a claim for the federal child and dependent care credit, you can still claim the New York State child and dependent care credit if **all four** of the following apply:

1. Your filing status is *Single, Head of household, Qualifying widow(er) with dependent child*, or *Married filing joint return*. However, see the special rule for *Married persons filing separate federal and New York State returns* in the instructions for Form IT-216.
2. The care was provided so you (and your spouse, if you were married) could work or look for work. However, if you did not find a job and have no earned income for the year, you cannot take the credit. If you or your spouse was a student or disabled, see the instructions for Form IT-216.
3. Your child (or other qualifying person(s) for whom the care was provided) lived in the same home with you for more than half the year.
4. The person who provided the care was not your spouse, the parent of your qualifying child under age 13, or a person whom you can claim as a dependent. If your child provided the care, he or she must have been age 19 or older by December 31 of the tax year.

A qualifying person is:

- A child under age 13 whom you can claim as a dependent (see also *Special rule for children of divorced or separated parents* in the instructions for Form IT-216). If the child turned age 13 during the year, the child is a qualifying person for the part of the year he or she was under age 13.
- Your spouse who is disabled and not able to care for himself or herself.
- Any person who is disabled and not able to care for himself or herself whom you can claim as a dependent (or could claim as a dependent except that the person had gross income of \$3,900 or more or filed a joint return).
- Any person who is disabled and not able to care for himself or herself whom you could claim as a dependent except that you (or your spouse, if filing a joint return), could be claimed as a dependent on someone else's return.

Caution: To be a qualifying person, the person must have lived with you for more than half of the tax year.

To claim this credit, you must complete [Form IT-216](#), *Claim for Child and Dependent Care Credit*, and submit it with your Form IT-201 or IT-203.

For more information on the qualifications to claim the federal child and dependent care credit, see federal [Publication 503](#), *Child and Dependent Care Expenses*. This federal publication is available on the IRS Web site (www.irs.gov).

Earned income credit (EIC)

The New York State earned income credit (EIC) is a special income tax credit for certain people who earn income from work. If you claimed the federal EIC and file a New York State income tax return, you qualify to claim the New York State EIC.

New York City full-year residents and New York City part-year residents who claimed the federal EIC may claim a New York City EIC. You must file a New York income tax return to claim the New York City EIC. This credit is in addition to the New York State EIC or noncustodial parent New York State EIC (see the [instructions for Form IT-215](#), *Claim for Earned Income Credit*).

The New York EIC is equal to 30% of your allowable federal EIC. However, your New York State EIC will be reduced by the amount of any New York State household credit you are allowed.

New York State residents and part-year residents qualify for refunds of any EIC in excess of their New York State tax liabilities. Nonresidents do not qualify for refunds of the New York State EIC.

To claim this credit, you must complete [Form IT-215](#), *Claim for Earned Income Credit*, and submit it with your Form IT-201 or IT-203. For more information, visit our Web site.

Real property tax credit

You may qualify for the real property tax credit if you are a New York State resident, your household gross income for the tax year was \$18,000 or less, and you pay either real property taxes or rent for your residence. If all qualified members of the household are under age 65, the credit can be as much as \$75. If at least one qualified member of the household is age 65 or older, the credit can be as much as \$375.

New York State residents qualify for a refund of any real property tax credit in excess of their New York State tax liabilities. Residents who are not required to file New York State returns may qualify for a refund of the full amount of the credit. Part-year residents and nonresidents of New York State do not qualify for this credit.

If you are required to file a New York State income tax return, you should submit [Form IT-214](#), *Claim for Real Property Tax Credit for Homeowners and Renters*, with your Form IT-201. If you are not required to file a New York State income tax return, you can file Form IT-214 by itself.

For more information, visit our Web site or see the [instructions for Form IT-214](#).

Credit for purchase of an automated external defibrillator

This credit is available to taxpayers who purchase a qualified automated external defibrillator. The credit is equal to the lesser of the purchase cost of the unit, or \$500. There is no limit on the number of units purchased during the tax year for which the credit may be taken. However, the credit cannot exceed \$500 for **each** unit purchased.

An *automated external defibrillator*, as defined under section 3000-b of the Public Health Law, is a medical device approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration, that:

- is capable of recognizing the presence or absence, in a patient, of ventricular fibrillation and rapid ventricular tachycardia;
- is capable of determining, without intervention by an operator, whether defibrillation should be performed on the patient;
- upon determining that defibrillation should be performed, automatically charges and requests delivery of an electrical impulse to the patient's heart; and
- then, upon action by an operator, delivers an appropriate electrical impulse to the patient's heart to perform defibrillation.

The credit is not refundable, and you may not carry any unused credit forward to future years.

To claim this credit, complete [Form IT-250](#), *Claim for Credit for Purchase of an Automated External Defibrillator*, and submit it with your Form IT-201 or IT-203.

Long-term care insurance credit

The long-term care insurance credit is equal to 20% of the premiums you paid during the tax year for the purchase of, or for continuing coverage under a qualifying long-term care insurance policy.

The long-term care insurance credit is limited for part-year and nonresident individuals, estates, and trusts to the amount determined by multiplying the total credit by your income percentage.

A *qualifying long-term care insurance policy* is one that:

- is approved by the New York State Superintendent of Insurance under Insurance Law section 1117(g); **and**

- is a qualified long-term care insurance contract under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) section 7702B. (Note that section 7702B relates to policies for which a federal itemized deduction is allowed.)

or

- is a group contract delivered or issued for delivery outside New York State; **and**
- the group contract is a qualified long-term care insurance contract under IRC section 7702B. The premiums paid for this insurance qualify for the credit even if the policy is not approved by the New York State Superintendent of Insurance.

A *qualified long-term care insurance contract* under IRC section 7702B is an insurance contract that provides only coverage of qualified long-term care services. The contract must:

- be guaranteed renewable;
- not provide for cash surrender value or other money that can be paid, assigned, pledged, or borrowed;
- provide that refunds, other than refunds on the death of the insured or complete surrender or cancellation of the contract, and dividends under the contract must be used only to reduce future premiums or increase future benefits; **and**
- generally not pay or reimburse expenses incurred for services or items that would be reimbursed under Medicare, except where Medicare is a secondary payer, or the contract makes per diem or other periodic payments without regard to expenses.

The credit is not refundable. However, any amount of credit or carryover of credit not deductible in the current tax year may be carried over to be deducted for the following year or years.

To claim this credit, complete [Form IT-249](#), *Claim for Long-Term Care Insurance Credit*, and submit it with your Form IT-201 or IT-203.

For more information, see the [instructions for Form IT-249](#).

Nursing home assessment credit

New York State allows a personal income tax credit for the portion of the assessment imposed on a residential health care facility (nursing home) pursuant to Public Health Law section 2807-d(2)(b) that is passed through to a private-pay resident of the nursing home. The amount of the credit is equal to the total portion of the assessment that is passed through and directly paid by an individual during the tax year. The portion must be separately stated and accounted for on the billing statements or other statements provided to a resident of a nursing home, and must be paid directly by the individual claiming the credit. If an individual other than the

resident of the home is actually paying the portion, the individual who paid the portion, not the resident, is entitled to claim the credit. If more than one individual is directly paying the total nursing home bill, the total portion of the assessment paid must be divided between or among them according to the percentage of the total nursing home expenses paid by each individual.

An individual may claim the full credit even though the resident may be receiving benefits from a long-term care insurance policy. If a resident assigns his or her long-term care insurance benefits to a nursing home, the resident is treated as having paid that amount towards the total nursing home bill. The credit cannot be claimed for any portion of the assessment that is paid directly to the nursing home by a health insurance policy, with public funds (e.g., Medicaid or Medicare), or that is paid by a trust or other entity.

Where a nursing home does not separately state the portion of the assessment passed through to a resident on the resident's billing statements, the nursing home should provide the resident (or the person to whom the resident's billing statements are sent) with a summary statement that indicates the total portion of the assessment paid by or on behalf of the resident during the tax year (or any succeeding year). There is no particular form for this statement. However, the statement must contain the name of the residential health care facility, the name of the resident of the facility, the period covered by the statement (e.g., calendar year 2015) and the amount of the assessment that was passed through and actually paid (not the billed amount) by or on behalf of the resident during the calendar year. For example, if the resident's January 2016 bill was actually paid in December 2015, the amount of the assessment passed through for January would be included on the 2015 summary statement provided by the nursing home.

If the amount of any nursing home assessment credit is in excess of your New York State income tax liability, the excess may be refunded without interest.

To claim the credit, you must complete [Form IT-258, Claim for Nursing Home Assessment Credit](#), and submit it with your Form IT-201 or Form IT-203.

New York City school tax credit

The New York City school tax credit is available to a New York City resident or part-year resident who cannot be claimed as a dependent on another taxpayer's federal return.

Married persons filing a joint return and surviving spouses with income of \$250,000 or less are entitled to a credit of \$125. All other taxpayers with

income of \$250,000 or less are entitled to a credit of \$62.50¹. There is no credit allowed for taxpayers with income of more than \$250,000.

If you are a New York City resident or part-year resident, you may qualify for a refund of any school tax credit in excess of your New York City resident tax due. The credit must be prorated if the taxpayer changes his or her New York City resident status during the tax year.

Taxpayers filing New York State returns on Form IT-201 or IT-203 can claim this credit directly on their tax returns. See the instructions for these forms for more information.

You can claim the New York City school tax credit even if you are not required to file a New York State income tax return. See [Form NYC-210, Claim for New York City School Tax Credit](#), and its [instructions](#).

New York City enhanced real property tax credit

The New York City enhanced real property tax credit is available for tax years 2014 and 2015. You may qualify for the credit if you are a full-year New York City resident, your household gross income for the tax year was \$200,000 or less, and you pay either real property taxes or rent for your residence. The maximum amount of credit allowed per household is \$500.

New York City residents qualify for a refund of any real property tax credit in excess of their New York tax liabilities. City residents who are not required to file New York State return may qualify for a refund of the full amount of the credit. Part-year residents and nonresidents of New York City do not qualify for this credit.

If you are required to file a New York State income tax return, you should submit [Form NYC-208, Claim for New York City Enhanced Real Property Tax Credit for Homeowners and Renters](#), with your Form IT-201. If you are not required to file a New York State income tax return, you can file Form IT-208 by itself.

For more information, visit our Web site or see the [instructions for Form IT-208](#).

Other taxes

Metropolitan Commuter Transportation Mobility Tax (MCTMT)

The MCTMT applies to certain employers. It also applies to certain individuals (including partners in partnerships, and members of limited liability companies (LLCs) that are treated as partnerships for federal income tax purposes) who have net earnings from self-employment and

¹ You may enter only whole dollar amounts on income tax forms. Therefore, the actual amount of credit allowed for taxpayers with income of \$250,000 or less, is \$63.

who are engaging in business within the metropolitan commuter transportation district (MCTD).

The MCTD includes New York City (the counties of New York (Manhattan), Bronx, Kings (Brooklyn), Queens, and Richmond (Staten Island)), and the counties of Rockland, Nassau, Suffolk, Orange, Putnam, Dutchess, and Westchester.

Beginning with tax year 2015, if you are a self-employed individual subject to the MCTMT, you must report your MCTMT liability on your personal income tax return (see *Estimated tax requirements* on page 30). For tax years prior to 2015, the MCTMT was reported on a separate return.

For more information, visit our Web site or call the MCTMT Information Center at (518) 485-2392.

Sales or use tax

You must report any unpaid sales or use tax owed for the tax year on your personal income tax return. You owe sales or compensating use tax if you:

- purchased an item or service subject to tax that is delivered to you in New York State without payment of New York State and local tax to the seller; or
- purchased an item or service outside New York State that is subject to sales tax in New York State (and you were a resident of New York State at the time of the purchase) and subsequently used the item or service in New York State.

Note: You may be entitled to a credit for sales tax paid to another state. For more information, see Tax Bulletin [Reciprocal Credit for Sales or Use Taxes Paid to Other Taxing Jurisdictions \(TB-ST-765\)](#).

For sales and use tax purposes, a resident includes individuals who have a permanent place of abode in the state. Accordingly, you may be a resident for sales tax purposes even though you may not be a resident for income tax purposes. See the instructions for [Form ST-140, Individual Purchaser's Annual Report of Sales and Use Tax](#), for more information.

You may not use your personal income tax return to report:

- Any sales and use tax on business purchases if the business is registered for sales and use tax purposes. You must report this tax on the business's sales tax return.
- Any unpaid sales and use tax on motor vehicles, trailers, all-terrain vehicles, vessels, or snowmobiles. This tax is paid directly to the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). However, if you will not be registering or titling your motor vehicle, trailer, all-terrain vehicle, vessel, or snowmobile at the DMV, you should

remit the tax directly to the Tax Department using [Form ST-130](#), *Business Purchaser's Report of Sales and Use Tax*, or Form ST-140.

An unpaid sales or use tax liability commonly arises if you made purchases through the Internet, by catalog, from television shopping channels, or on an Indian reservation, or if you purchased items or services subject to tax in another state and brought them back to New York for use here.

Example 1: *You purchased a computer over the Internet that was delivered to your house in Monroe County, New York, from an out-of-state company and did not pay sales tax to that company.*

Example 2: *You purchased a book on a trip to New Hampshire that you brought back to your residence in Nassau County, New York, for use there.*

You may also owe an additional **local** tax if you made a purchase in a locality in New York State and brought the item into or subsequently used the service in another New York State locality where you were a resident and that locality had a higher tax rate than where you made the purchase.

If you are not filing an income tax return but owe sales or use tax for the tax year, you must pay the unpaid sales or use tax liability by filing [Form ST-140](#) by the April 15 due date. Alternatively, you may file [Form ST-141](#), *Individual Purchaser's Periodic Report of Sales and Use Tax*, periodically to report sales or use tax liability on other than an annual basis.

For additional information, see the [instructions for Form IT-201](#) and/or Tax Bulletin [TB-ST-913](#), *Use Tax for Individuals (including Estates and Trusts)*.

When to file

If you are a calendar year filer, your personal income tax return is due by the fifteenth day of the fourth month following the end of the calendar year. Therefore, to be timely, you should file your income tax return as soon as you can after January 1, but not after April 15.

If you file for a fiscal year, your return is due by the fifteenth day of the fourth month following the end of your fiscal year.

When a due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, you are permitted to file and pay on the next business day.

Automatic six-month extension of time to file

If you cannot meet the filing due date, you may request an [extension of time to file](#) your Form IT-201 or Form IT-203 by:

- using our Web site to [Web File your extension request](#) for free;

- using tax preparation software (check your software package to see if you have the option to e-file your request for an extension);
- filing Form IT-370, *Application for Automatic Six-Month Extension of Time to File for Individuals*; or
- using a paid tax preparer to file an extension for you. (If the paid tax preparer will also be preparing your personal income tax return and he or she is required to e-file that return, the preparer must e-file your extension request.)

An automatic six-month extension of time to file does not extend your time to pay any tax due. You must estimate your New York State, New York City, and Yonkers income taxes due, but be as exact as you can with the information you have (see *Estimated tax requirements* on page 30). If we later determine that your estimate was not reasonable, the extension will not be allowed, and you may be subject to penalty and interest.

The filing due date for your income tax return will be automatically extended for six months if you file your request for an extension on or before the due date of your return and pay any tax due and/or local sales or use tax you owe with your request. Depending on the filing method you choose, you may pay by check, money order, electronic funds withdrawal, or credit card. For more information on your payment options, see page 27 or visit our Web site.

Automatic extension for death of a spouse

If your spouse dies within 30 days before the due date for filing your personal income tax return or paying the tax due on that return, the department will grant you an automatic extension of 90 days to file your income tax return and to pay the tax due on the return. No penalties or interest for late filing or late payment will be imposed during this 90-day extension period.

- If you file a paper return, you must enter the decedent's date of death in the space provided and you must enter **D9** in the special condition code box provided on the front page of the New York State personal income tax return.
- If you e-file your return, you must enter the decedent's date of death in the space provided and must enter **D9** in the special condition code box. If the tax preparation software does not support a special condition code, the return should be filed on paper following the instructions for filing a paper return.

Free tax return preparation assistance by volunteers

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs offer free tax help for those who qualify.

Trained community volunteers will:

- help you prepare your return,

- assist you in taking advantage of valuable tax credits like the earned income tax credit, and
- electronically file your return (available in most locations).

To learn more and to see if you qualify to participate, visit the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Web Site (www.irs.gov).

Paid tax return preparers

As a general rule, if you are paying someone to prepare your New York State tax return, that person must be registered with New York State.

There are some exceptions to this rule. Some **licensed** individuals are **not** required to register with New York State. These exempted persons include:

- licensed certified public accountants (CPA) or public accountants (PA) who are licensed in any of the fifty states,
- enrolled agents licensed by the Internal Revenue Service,
- attorneys licensed in any of the fifty states,
- employees of a CPA, PA, enrolled agent, or law firm who prepare tax returns under the direct supervision of a CPA, PA, enrolled agent, or attorney of that firm,
- employees of a business who prepare that business's return or report,
- clerical employees, and
- volunteer tax preparers.

However, if someone provides tax refund anticipation loans or checks, or helps you apply for such a loan or check, they must be registered with New York State.

Taxpayers who use the services of a paid tax preparer are entitled to protection from unfair treatment, see *Consumer Bill of Rights Regarding Tax Preparers* on page 33.

Registered tax preparer database

The Tax Department maintains a searchable database of persons who have registered with us as tax preparers or refund anticipation loan or check facilitators. You can search the database to see if your preparer has registered.

When searching the database, keep in mind:

- Licensed individuals who are exempt from the registration requirement (such as accountants and attorneys) will not appear in the database. This does not mean they are not qualified to prepare your return; it only means they are not required to register.
- Our database only keeps track of who has registered as a tax preparer.

New York State does not vouch for the competency of a tax return preparer or refund anticipation loan or check facilitator merely because they have registered.

For more information, visit the [Verify your tax preparer](#) page on the department Web site.

Filing options

Web File for free. The Tax Department's Web File service may let you prepare and file your income tax return for free. Visit our Web site to learn more about [free e-file options](#).

E-file. If you prepare your personal income tax return using tax software, you are generally required to file electronically (e-file). You can e-file your income tax return using your personal computer and an approved, commercially available software package or you can choose to have a tax professional e-file for you. If you choose to use a tax preparer, he or she may be required to e-file your return.

E-filing is easy, safe, and allows you to get your refund faster. If you purchase the software to prepare your New York State return, there is no extra charge to e-file your return. You may also qualify for free electronic filing, in which case there is no charge to prepare or e-file your return.

For more information on [e-file](#), visit our Web site.

Paper return by mail. You can mail your paper return and any required attachments to the Tax Department using the United States Postal Service or a private delivery service. For more information, see the instructions for the form you are filing.

Payment options

If you have a balance due on your return, you have several payment options. For specific information on selecting a payment option, see the instructions for the tax form or tax preparation software you are using. To avoid interest and penalties, your payment must be made by the filing due date.

Note: The law allows the department to charge a \$50 fee when a check, money order, or electronic payment is returned by a bank for nonpayment. However, if an electronic payment is returned as a result of an error by the bank or the department, the department will not charge the fee.

Check or money order

If you are paying your New York State income tax by check or money order, you must submit Form IT-201-V, *Payment Voucher for Income Tax Returns*, with your payment. For more information, see [Form IT-201-V](#).

Electronic funds withdrawal

You may authorize the department to make an electronic funds withdrawal from your designated bank account to pay any balance due. You can give your authorization online using the department Web site or by completing

the appropriate line on your income tax return. By choosing either option, you authorize the department to transfer money from your account to the state's account.

You must specify a future payment date that is on or before the due date of your return. If you file before the due date, money will not be withdrawn from your account before the date you specify. To avoid interest and penalties, you must authorize a withdrawal on or before the filing due date. If you designate a weekend or a bank holiday, the payment will be withdrawn the next business day.

For more information, see the instructions for the form or tax preparation software you are using, or visit our Web site.

Paying by credit card

You can use your American Express Card, Discover/Novus, Visa, or MasterCard to pay any balance due on your New York State personal income tax return (Form IT-201 or IT-203) or to make quarterly estimated tax payments. You will be charged a convenience fee, and terms and conditions may vary among the credit card service providers.

For more information, visit our Web site or see the instructions for the tax form you are using.

Overpayments, refunds, and collection of debts

Direct deposit of refunds

You have the option to have your income tax refund deposited directly into your bank account. Payment by this method is more secure since there is no check or debit card to get lost or stolen. With direct deposit, you will receive your refund faster than if it were sent by mail. Direct deposit is the fastest and easiest way to get your refund.

For more information, refer to the instructions for the form you are filing or tax preparation software you are using.

Debit card by mail

You may choose to have your overpayment refunded by debit card. Debit cards are secure, easy to use, and flexible. The department will mail your debit card to the **mailing address** listed on your income tax return.

If you filed a joint return, separate debit cards will be sent together in one envelope to you and your spouse. One or both of you can activate your card(s). Once activated, either card can access the entire amount of the refund.

In most instances, there is no charge to you for using the card. You can:

- Get cash from a bank. You do not need an account, but will need to show ID. There is no fee for the first withdrawal, which can be for the entire refund amount. There is a \$1 fee for each withdrawal after that.
- Deposit it into your bank account (but consider direct deposit instead).
- Make purchases everywhere that debit MasterCard is accepted – stores, online, or over the phone (there is never a fee for retail purchases).
- Make ATM withdrawals (there may be a fee for using an ATM that is not in the issuer’s network).
- Use your card to pay bills – online or in person.

More information will be provided with the card, or you can visit www.bankofamerica.com/nyrefund for details.

Paper check by mail

You may choose to have your overpayment refunded by paper check. Paper checks for joint filers will be issued with both names and must be signed by both spouses. The department will mail your check to the **mailing address** listed on your income tax return.

Paper checks take weeks to be processed, printed, and mailed. If you don’t have a bank account, you will likely be charged a fee to cash your check. You may want to consider a debit card refund instead (see *Debit card by mail* on page 28).

Estimated tax

You have the option of applying all or a portion of your overpayment to your next year’s estimated tax account by completing the appropriate line(s) on your income tax return (see *Estimated tax requirements* on page 30).

Collection of debts from your refund

We will keep all or part of your overpayment (refund) if you:

- owe a New York State tax liability or a New York City or Yonkers personal income tax liability;
- owe past-due support or a past-due legally enforceable debt to the IRS, to a New York State agency, or to another state;
- defaulted on a governmental education loan, state university, or city university loan; or
- owe a New York City tax warrant judgment debt.

We will refund any amount that exceeds your debt.

A *New York State agency* includes any state department, board, bureau, division, commission, committee, public authority, public benefit corporation, council, office, or other entity performing a governmental or proprietary function for the state or a social services district.

If you have any questions about whether you owe a past-due legally enforceable debt to the IRS, to another state, or to a New York State agency, contact the IRS, the other state, or the state agency.

For New York State tax liabilities or New York City or Yonkers personal income tax liabilities, call the Civil Enforcement Division (CED) at (518) 457-5434 or write to:

NYS TAX DEPARTMENT
CED
WA HARRIMAN CAMPUS
ALBANY NY 12227-0841

For information relating to a New York City tax warrant judgment debt, visit the New York City Department of Finance Web site ([Tax Warrants and Collection Cases](#)).

Estimated tax requirements

New York State Tax Law requires you to pay income tax and MCTMT during the year, either through withholding or estimated tax.

You may have to pay estimated tax if you are self-employed, receive a taxable pension or annuity, or receive any other income from which taxes are not withheld.

If you are married, each spouse should maintain a separate estimated tax account. If you and your spouse each maintain an estimated tax account and file a joint New York State income tax return, the balances of both accounts will be credited to your joint income tax return.

If you have substantially underpaid your taxes during the year (either through insufficient estimated tax payments or insufficient withholding tax, or a combination of the two), you will probably have to pay a penalty in addition to tax.

For more information, see [Form IT-2105](#), *Estimated Tax Payment Voucher for Individuals*, and [Form IT-2105-I](#), *Instructions for Form IT-2105*.

Note: You can set up an [Online Services](#) account to make estimated tax payments, check your balance, and reconcile your estimated tax account online through our Web site.

Estimated income tax

Estimated income tax is the amount of New York State, New York City, and Yonkers tax you expect to owe for the year after subtracting:

- the amount of tax you expect to have withheld;
- the estimated income tax paid with [Form IT-2663](#), *Nonresident Real Property Estimated Income Tax Payment Form*;

- the estimated income tax paid with [Form IT-2664](#), *Nonresident Cooperative Unit Estimated Income Tax Payment Form*;
- the estimated income tax paid on your behalf by a partnership or S corporation; **and**
- the amount of any credits you plan to take.

Generally, you must pay estimated income tax if you expect to owe, after subtracting your withholding, estimated income tax paid with Form IT-2663 and/or IT-2664, estimated income tax paid on your behalf by a partnership or S corporation, and credits, at least \$300 of either New York State, New York City, or Yonkers tax for the tax year, **and** you expect your withholding, estimated income tax paid with Form IT-2663 and/or IT-2664, estimated income tax paid on your behalf by a partnership or S corporation, and credits to be less than the smaller of:

1. 90% of the personal income tax shown on your current year's tax return, or
2. 100% of the personal income tax shown on your prior year return (110% of that amount if you are not a farmer or a fisherman and the New York adjusted gross income shown on that return is more than \$150,000, or, if married filing separately, more than \$75,000). However, if you did not file a tax return for the prior year, or your prior year return did not cover all 12 months, item 2 does not apply.

Do not include any amount of sales or use tax you expect to owe when computing your estimated income tax (see *Sales or use tax* on page 23).

Estimated MCTMT

Generally, if you are a self-employed individual subject to the MCTMT (see *Metropolitan Commuter Transportation Mobility Tax (MCTMT)* on page 22) you must make estimated MCTMT payments if you expect to owe **any** MCTMT for the tax year after subtracting any estimated MCTMT paid on your behalf by a partnership.

Request withholding from an annuity or pension

Payers of annuities and pensions are not required to withhold New York State, New York City, and/or Yonkers income tax from pension or annuity payments. However, if your pension or annuity must be included in your New York adjusted gross income and is payable over a period longer than one year, you may request that the payer withhold New York State, New York City, and/or Yonkers income taxes.

For more information, see [Form IT-2104-P](#), *Annuitant's Request for Income Tax Withholding*.

Privacy and confidentiality

The Tax Law contains strict secrecy provisions to protect the confidentiality of tax returns and tax return information. Consequently, you must give specific written authorization to a practitioner, paid preparer, or other

representative before he or she will be given access to your confidential records or be allowed to represent you before the department or the Division of Tax Appeals. There are various levels of authorization you can give, as described below.

Third-party designee

If you want to authorize a friend, family member, return preparer, or any other individual (third-party designee) to discuss your tax return with the department, mark an **X** in the *Yes* box in the *Third-party designee* area of your return and enter the information requested. If not, mark an **X** in the *No* box.

If you mark the *Yes* box, you (and your spouse, if filing a joint return) are authorizing the department to discuss with the designee any questions related to your return. You are also authorizing the designee to give and receive confidential information relating to:

- your return, including missing information,
- any notices or bills arising from the filing that you share with the designee (they will not be sent to the designee),
- any payments and collection activity arising from the filing, and
- the status of your return or refund.

The authorization will not expire, but will only cover matters relating to your return. If you decide to revoke the designee's authority at any time, you must call the department (see *Need help?* on the back cover).

You are not authorizing the designee to receive your refund, bind you to anything (including additional tax liability), or otherwise represent you before the department. If you want someone to represent you or perform services for you beyond the scope of the third-party designee, you must designate the person using another method such as [Form DTF-280](#), *Tax Information Authorization*, or a power of attorney.

Power of attorney

A power of attorney (POA) is evidence that the individual(s) named as your representative(s) has the authority to receive confidential tax information and to obligate, bind, or appear on your behalf with respect to certain tax matters. The power of attorney must contain explicit authorization for your representative to act for you, and must be properly completed and signed.

The department prefers that practitioners use one of the department's [power of attorney forms](#) available on our Web site.

- [Form POA-1](#), *Power of Attorney*, or
- [Form ET-14](#), *Estate Tax Power of Attorney*.

The department will accept other forms if they contain all the necessary elements as required on the department's forms.

Tax Department power of attorney forms may be used for New York State tax matters, New York City tax matters, or both.

Consumer Bill of Rights Regarding Tax Preparers

Taxpayers who use the services of paid tax preparers are entitled to protection from unfair treatment. While most tax preparers act within the law and treat their clients fairly, there are some that do not.

All tax preparers are subject to certain requirements concerning refund anticipation loans (RALs) and refund anticipation checks (RACs).

- Tax preparers are prohibited from advertising RALs as refunds (for example, advertising a RAL as an *instant refund*).
- Any advertisement by a tax preparer that mentions RALs must state conspicuously that a RAL is in fact a loan and that a fee or interest will be charged by the lending institution. The lending institution must be identified in the advertisement.
- **Before** a taxpayer enters into a RAL or an agreement for a RAC, the tax preparer facilitating the loan must provide a disclosure statement to the taxpayer in writing.

The department produces and makes available an informational flier providing certain information for consumers about their rights regarding tax preparers. The flier is [Publication 135](#), *Consumer Bill of Rights Regarding Tax Preparers*, and it is available on our Web site.

Note: Tax preparers (except those listed as *Exempt preparers* below and tax preparers who prepare tax returns within New York City) are required under the General Business Law (Article 24-C) to provide you with contact information and a copy of Publication 135, *Consumer Bill of Rights Regarding Tax Preparers*.

Requirement to provide contact information

Tax preparers are required to provide each of their customers with a receipt containing an address and phone number at which the preparer can be contacted throughout the year. If the actual person who prepared the return is an employee, partner, or shareholder of an entity (business), the general address and phone number of the business should be on the receipt.

Exempt preparers

The following tax preparers are exempt from the requirements to provide you with contact information and a copy of Publication 135:

- an employee or officer of a business enterprise who is preparing the tax returns of that business enterprise;
- a fiduciary, and the employees of the fiduciary, who advise or assist in the preparation of income tax returns on behalf of the fiduciary estate, the testator, trustee, grantor, or beneficiaries;

- an attorney who advises or assists in the preparation of tax returns in the practice of law, and his or her employees;
- a certified public accountant (CPA) licensed under the New York State education law or licensed by one or more of the states or jurisdictions of the United States, and his or her employees;
- a public accountant licensed under the New York State education law and his or her employees;
- an employee of a governmental unit, agency, or instrumentality who advises or assists in the preparation of income tax returns in the performance of his or her duties; and
- an agent enrolled to practice before the IRS.

New York City tax preparers

Tax preparers operating within New York City are not subject to the provisions previously explained for tax returns actually prepared within the city. Instead, Subchapter 8 of Chapter 4 of Title 20 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York provides rules that apply specifically to tax preparers operating in New York City.

For more information on New York City’s consumer bill of rights regarding tax preparers, visit the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs Web site (www.nyc.gov/consumers) or dial 311 (212-NEW-YORK if you are outside New York City).

New York State School Tax Relief (STAR) Program

The New York State School Tax Relief Program (STAR) provides homeowners with partial exemptions from school property taxes.

There are two types of STAR exemptions for homeowners, basic STAR and enhanced STAR. These STAR exemptions apply only to school district taxes. They do not apply to property taxes for other purposes, such as county, town or city (except in cities where schools are funded through city property taxes – Buffalo, New York City, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers).

For more information, visit the [STAR Program](#) page on the department Web site.

Suspension of STAR eligibility for taxpayers with past due state tax liabilities

The Tax Law authorizes the department to suspend eligibility for STAR exemptions for taxpayers whose total past-due state tax liabilities are \$4,500 or more and who own real property (wholly or in part) that is eligible for the STAR exemption. For more information, see [TSB-M-12\(6\)I](#), *Summary of Budget Bill Personal Income Tax Changes Enacted in 2012*.

New York State Tax Department
Online Services

**Create an Online Services account
and log in to:**

- make payments
- file certain returns and other tax forms
- view your account and filing information
- change your address
- receive email notifications
- respond to bills and notices

Access is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (except for scheduled maintenance).

www.tax.ny.gov

Need help?



Visit our Web site at **www.tax.ny.gov**

- get information and manage your taxes online
- check for new online services and features



Telephone assistance

Automated income tax refund status: (518) 457-5149

Personal Income Tax Information Center: (518) 457-5181

To order forms and publications: (518) 457-5431



Text Telephone (TTY) Hotline (for persons with hearing and speech disabilities using a TTY): If you have access to a TTY, contact us at (518) 485-5082. If you do not own a TTY, check with independent living centers or community action programs to find out where machines are available for public use.



Persons with disabilities: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, we will ensure that our lobbies, offices, meeting rooms, and other facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. If you have questions about special accommodations for persons with disabilities, call the information center.