

# Questions You Should Ask Before You Hire a Tax Preparer

You've decided that your tax situation is difficult enough (or your time is valuable enough) that you want to hire a tax professional to prepare your taxes this year. But how do you know which tax pro is right for you?

You want to find an experienced tax preparer who understands your unique situation. Asking for referrals from friends, family or colleagues who have similar tax situations is always a good idea, but you should do your own homework too.

Interview several tax professionals to make sure you find the right tax pro for you. Here are some questions you should ask when interviewing a tax preparer:

1. How long have you been preparing taxes?
2. What licenses, experience or other credentials do you have?
3. Do you specialize in any areas?
4. If you have a small business, you should ask the potential tax professional if they are familiar with your type of business, or if they have other clients who are in the same business you are in.
5. Are you available throughout the year if I have questions or need to do any tax planning?
6. What are your fees?
7. Do you prepare my return yourself, or do you outsource it to someone else?
8. How long will it take to prepare my return?
9. Can you help me if I get an IRS notice or if I am audited?
10. Do you do tax planning and tax estimates, or do you just prepare taxes?

The point is to find a tax professional who understands your unique situation and who will be available to provide help throughout the year instead of only at tax time.