



In This Issue

[Where's Your
Income Tax Refund?](#)

[Second Quarter
Estimated Tax
Payments Due Next
Month](#)

[Now is a Good Time
to Plan for Next
Year's Taxes](#)

[College Financial Aid
Planning](#)

[Office Hours Update](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Newsletter

With the busy tax season finally behind us, we wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued business over the past year. Our business continues to grow - thanks to the many referrals from our valued clients like you. We appreciate your business and look forward to assisting you with your future tax planning needs.

Where's My Income Tax Refund?

You can now check the status of your 2015 Federal and New York State refunds on line. For other states, please contact our office.

For your Federal refund status:

- Go to <https://www.irs.gov>
- Click "Refund" in top menu bar
- Click the "Where's My Refund" button
- Enter your Social Security Number, 2015 filing status and the exact dollar amount of your refund
- Click the "Submit" button

For your New York State refund status:

- Go to <https://www.tax.ny.gov/online/>
- Click "Individuals" in top bar
- Click "Refunds & Notices" in left box
- Click "Check Your Refund Status"
- Click the "Get Started" Button and follow the prompts

Second Quarter Estimated Tax Payments Due Next Month

A reminder for all our clients: If we sent you estimated tax vouchers with your completed 2015 tax returns, the next

payment is due June 15th. Be sure to have your payment postmarked by that date.

Also, the third quarter payment is due 9/15/16, and the fourth quarter is due 1/15/17.

Now is a Good Time to Plan for Next Year's Taxes

You may be tempted to forget about your taxes once you've filed but some tax planning done now may benefit you later. Now is a good time to set up a system so you can keep your tax records safe and easy to find. Here are some IRS tips to give you a leg up on next year's taxes:

- **Take action when life changes occur.** Some life events can change the amount of tax you owe. Examples include a change in marital status or the birth of a child. When these happen, you may need to change the amount of tax withheld from your pay. To do that, file a new Form W-4, Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate, with your employer. Use the IRS Withholding Calculator tool on IRS.gov to help you fill out the form.
- **Report changes in circumstances to the Health Insurance Marketplace.** If you enroll in insurance coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace for 2016 coverage, you should report changes in circumstances to the Marketplace when they happen. Report events such as changes in your income or family size. Doing so will help you avoid getting too much or too little financial assistance.
- **Keep records safe.** Print and keep a copy of your 2015 tax return and supporting records together in a safe place. This includes W-2 Forms, Forms 1099, bank records and records of your family's health care insurance coverage. If you ever need your tax return or records, it will be easier for you to get them. For example, you may need a copy of your tax return if you apply for a home loan or financial aid for college. You should use your tax return as a guide when you do your taxes next year.
- **Stay organized.** Make tax time easier. Have your family put tax records in the same place during the year. That way you won't have to search for misplaced records when you file next year.
- **Think about itemizing.** You may be able to lower your taxes if you itemize deductions instead of taking the standard deduction. Owning a home, paying medical expenses and qualified donations to charity could mean more tax savings. See the instructions for Schedule A, Itemized Deductions, for a list of deductions.

For more information on federal taxes please visit IRS.gov.

College Financial Aid Planning

Individuals who want to attend college but cannot afford the costs outright must find alternative funding through various types of financial aid. Many factors affect eligibility for federal financial aid; therefore, all students should apply for financial aid every year even if they think they do not otherwise qualify.

FAFSA. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the first step in the financial aid process. Students use the FAFSA to apply for federal student aid, such as grants, loans, and work-study. The FAFSA must be submitted for each year the student wants financial aid.

Income tax return. If the student (or parents) needs to file a 2015 income tax return with the IRS, it is recommended that it is completed before filling out the FAFSA.

Expected Family Contribution. The questions on the FAFSA are required to calculate the student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC measures the student's family's financial strength and is used to determine the student's eligibility for federal student aid. The EFC is split between an expected amount contributed from the student (usually more) and an expected amount being contributed from the parents.

Student Aid Report. A student's EFC will be listed on their Student Aid Report (SAR). The SAR summarizes the information submitted on the student's FAFSA.

Financial need. Financial need is the difference between the EFC and the college's cost of attendance (which can include living expenses), as determined by the college. The college will use the student's EFC to prepare a financial aid package to help meet financial need.

Need analysis formula. To determine financial need, a need analysis formula measures the parents' and student's assets and income. Assets are measured as follows:

- * Assets in the student's name are assessed at a maximum rate of 20%, whereas parents' assets are assessed at a maximum rate of 12%.
- * The assets of other children are not considered by the need analysis formula.
- * Specific types of property (automobiles, computers, furniture, books, clothing and school supplies, boats, and appliances) do not count

as assets.

* Retirement funds and pensions are generally not considered assets.

* Annuities and life insurance policies are generally not considered assets.

* Small businesses owned and controlled by the student's family are excluded as assets.

However, a partnership where the family owns 50% of the business is not excluded.

* Consumer debt (such as a credit card balance) is not counted against assets and income.

* Only debt secured by property (mortgage on home or business loan for equipment) is counted against assets and income.

Office Hours Update

Our current office hours are Monday-Thursday 9 am-3 pm.

As always, if you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact our office.

Sincerely,

Kevin J. Zulch and Jennifer R. Neese
Zulch Tax Consultants & Accountants