

# Good organization key, IRS director advises

April 15, the federal income tax filing deadline may be a day of frenzied activity or just another day.

The significance of the 15th depends on how organized taxpayers are, according to R.L. Plate, district director of Internal Revenue for Michigan.

"April 15 doesn't have to be a hectic day in any household," Plate said, "especially when you consider that most of the time preparing an income tax return involves locating essential records. The actual completion of the form takes relatively little time."

AS AN important starting point, Plate suggests the taxpayer begin now to gather records and lists deductions.

"Begin with January and move forward toward the end of the year. Tally up such items as charitable contributions, medical expenses, taxes and interest payments. The advantage of starting this process now is that it allows enough time to write or call for missing receipts or records."

"Another advantage of beginning now is that it helps the taxpayer to determine the size of the refund he can expect."

ANOTHER IMPORTANT reason for getting an early start, according to Plate, "is that the sooner a return is filed, the earlier the taxpayer will receive his or her refund."

Plate also advised taxpayers to begin the process well ahead to avoid

making mistakes and omitting possible deductions.

"Faced with a deadline at the last minute, many people are apt to forget the day the wife used the station wagon to take a troop of scouts a hundred miles on a camping trip in such a case, actual charitable auto expenses are tax deductible, or a standard amount of seven cents a mile, to cover the cost of gasoline and oil, can be deducted."

According to Plate, the sofa a taxpayer donated to a church rummage sale or electrical appliances given to the local emergency relief fund last summer are apt to be long forgotten, although these items can be claimed as tax deductions at the fair market value.

ASSUMING Plate has convinced you to get started now with your taxes, how do you proceed? These are the steps he recommends:

First, get out a copy of your last year's return to make sure that no recording deductions are being overlooked.

Next, go through the canceled checks, picking out those which substantiate medical expenses, charitable contributions, interest payments, mortgage costs, etc.

Then, put on your thinking cap and see if you have missed any legitimate deductions to which you might be entitled. As part of your medical expenses, for example, you can include

the cost of transportation to and from a doctor's office, by either private vehicle, subway, bus or taxi.

Some taxpayers may not be sure just how many times they visited a doctor, a dentist, a clinic. Now is a good time to call up their offices and check.

Also, many late, hurried filers often overlook such deductible items as eyeglasses and batteries for hearing aids.

As a matter of fact, if you are paying off a large medical bill in installments, consider making a large payment in December if it will push your medical expenses to more than three per cent of adjusted gross income. In

some instances, it might pay to borrow the money.

ASIDE FROM medical expenses, there are many other deductions commonly overlooked by the hurried taxpayer. For example, if you take a job-related college course after work, you can deduct cost of travel from your job to the classroom.

When used to store income-producing property (stocks, bonds, etc.), rent on a self-storage box may be deductible. Legal expenses that are a necessary factor in producing taxable income are normally deductible. So, too, are union dues and dues to professional societies.

"The list could really go on and

on," says Plate. "Employment agency fees to secure employment, certain child care expenses, unemployment travel and transportation, even appraisal fees, subscriptions to professional journals, even the cost of having someone assist you in preparing your tax return."

Aside from deductions, there are other important items to keep in mind. For instance, make sure that you have a social security number to enter on your return—and one for your wife on a joint return.

And if there's been a name change, your local Social Security Administration office should be notified. Also,

if you have extra income—from a sideline job, for example—find out if you should pay self-employment taxes.

APRIL 15, 1975 A day so far and yet so near.

For the wise taxpayer who gets started early, it's just another day—in fact he'll probably have his refund by then. For the unprepared taxpayer, a day of chaos and, unfortunately for many, a day of possible overlooked deductions.

"In a nutshell, then, an early start on your taxes can save you dollars. And, by the way, now is as good a time as any to set up a record-keeping system for next year."

## IRS offers to work with service groups

Organizations on the lookout for an ideal public service activity might well consider teaming up with an unusual and, perhaps, untapped partner—the Internal Revenue Service.

For the sixth consecutive year, the IRS is conducting a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. People helping people with their tax returns is basically what the VITA program is all about.

Many low-income taxpayers have very simple returns to prepare and cannot afford to pay for professional assistance. This is where public service organizations and VITA come into use.

IF AN ORGANIZATION can enlist members willing to help taxpayers complete their tax returns fully and accurately, the IRS will train these helpers or assistants, as they are called in the VITA program, in basic income tax procedures without charge.

Volunteers need not have tax backgrounds. With a basic understanding of arithmetic, they can easily master the VITA course. In scheduling the


VITA training sessions, arrangements are left to the discretion of the local group or organization.

In terms of commitment, the VITA assistant can devote as much or as little time as he desires to assist taxpayers.


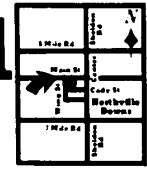
The IRS provides the necessary forms, schedules and background materials, and also makes available posters, flyers and other informational materials to help alert taxpayers to the free assistance. The club also is encouraged by the IRS to generate its own publicity.

CURRENTLY the IRS is contacting national public service groups and organizations asking them to participate in the VITA program for 1975. Help also will come from college students, community action groups, welfare workers, religious and governmental persons and fraternal society members.

Other national or regional and local organizations which have not been contacted but would like to participate in this unique activity should call their local IRS training branch in Detroit and ask about "VITA participation."



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