

Estimates of Taxpayer Burden

The table below shows burden estimates by form type and type of taxpayer. Time burden is further broken out by taxpayer activity. The largest component of time burden for all taxpayers is recordkeeping, as opposed to form completion and submission. In addition, the time burden associated with form completion and submission activities is closely tied to preparation method (self-prepared without software, self-prepared with software, and prepared by paid preparer).

Time spent and out-of-pocket costs are estimated separately. Out-of-pocket costs include any expenses incurred by taxpayers to prepare and submit their tax returns. Examples of out-of-pocket costs include tax return preparation and submission fees, postage, tax preparation software costs, photocopying costs, and phone calls (if not toll-free).

Both time and cost burdens are national averages and do not necessarily reflect a “typical” case. For instance, the average time burden for all taxpayers filing a 1040, 1040A, or 1040EZ was 24.2 hours, with an average cost of \$207 per return. This average includes all associated forms and schedules, across all preparation methods and all taxpayer activities. Taxpayers filing Form 1040 had an average burden of about 30 hours, and taxpayers filing Form 1040A and Form 1040EZ averaged about 11 hours. However, within each of these estimates, there is significant variation in taxpayer activity. Similarly, tax preparation fees vary extensively depending on the taxpayer’s tax situation and issues, the type of professional preparer, and the geographic area.

The data shown are the best estimates available as of September 20, 2006, from tax returns filed for 2005. The method used to estimate taxpayer burden incorporates results from a taxpayer burden survey conducted in 2000 and 2001. The estimates are subject to change as new forms and data become available. The estimates do not include burden associated with post-filing activities. However, operational IRS data indicate that electronically prepared and e-filed returns have fewer errors, implying a lower overall post-filing burden.

If you have comments concerning the time and cost estimates below, you can contact us at either one of the addresses shown under *We Welcome Comments on Forms* on page 79.

Estimated Average Taxpayer Burden for Individuals by Activity

The average time and costs required to complete and file Form 1040, Form 1040A, Form 1040EZ, their schedules, and accompanying forms will vary depending on individual circumstances. The estimated averages are:

Major Form Filed or Type of Taxpayer	Percentage of Returns	Average Time Burden (Hours)						Average Costs
		Total Time	Record Keeping	Tax Planning	Form Completion	Form Submission	All Other	
All taxpayers	100	24.2	14.6	3.4	3.3	0.5	2.5	\$207
Major forms filed								
1040	68	30.3	19.0	4.0	3.7	0.5	3.1	269
1040A & 1040EZ . . .	32	11.1	5.0	1.9	2.4	0.5	1.3	72
Type of taxpayer								
Nonbusiness*	72	13.2	5.8	2.6	2.9	0.5	1.5	103
Business*	28	52.2	37.0	5.4	4.3	0.5	5.1	470

* You are a “business” filer if you file one or more of the following with Form 1040: Schedule C, C-EZ, E, or F or Form 2106 or 2106-EZ. You are a “nonbusiness” filer if you did not file any of those schedules or forms with Form 1040.