

Sole proprietor return file, form by form

One copy per tax year. Each group follows a form on the return; tick each line when the record is in the folder, and write "n/a" where it does not apply.

Client or engagement

Schedule C income

- ☐ Forms 1099-NEC from clients
Compare with the client list; small clients may send none
- ☐ Forms 1099-MISC and 1099-K
From payers, card processors and payment apps
- ☐ Invoices and sales records
Including cash and app payments with no form
- ☐ Business bank statements
Every month of the tax year
- ☐ Profit and loss report from your books
Year-end, with the general ledger if kept

Schedule C expenses

- ☐ Receipts and invoices by category
Ads, insurance, fees, rent, supplies, software, travel
- ☐ Business credit card statements
Every month, personal charges marked
- ☐ Meal receipts with who attended and why
Notes on the receipt or in your log
- ☐ Mileage log with odometer readings
One total for 2025; two half-year totals for 2026
- ☐ Form W-9 and copies of Forms 1099-NEC for helpers paid
Backs the contract labor line
- ☐ Beginning and ending inventory counts
Only if you sell products

Form 8829 and Form 4562

- ☐ Home office and total home square footage
Measured space used only for the business
- ☐ Rent or mortgage interest, utilities and insurance bills
Whole-home amounts for the year

- ☐ Invoices for equipment and furniture bought

With the date each was placed in service

Form 7206, retirement and Form 8995

- ☐ Health insurance premium statements or Form 1095-A
Plan you paid for yourself and family, by month
- ☐ Months you or your spouse could join an employer plan
Those months are left out of Form 7206
- ☐ SEP-IRA, SIMPLE or solo 401(k) statements
Contributions made for the tax year
- ☐ Last year's Form 8995, if a QBI loss carried over
Part of the prior-year return

Form 1040-ES and prior year

- ☐ Estimated tax payment confirmations
All four due dates of the tax year, federal and state
- ☐ Last year's full tax return
Total tax and AGI set the safe harbor