

Online organizer setup worksheet for tax firms

Answer before you choose or renew an online organizer

Prepared for the clients of (firm name)

Your name, and your spouse's if filing jointly

Work through this worksheet once a year, before the first organizer goes out.

Each yes names what you need ready. Keep the answers with your written security plan.

Answer for the firm as a whole, then note any client group that needs a different route.

Your clients

Based on: Form 13614-C structure

Are most of your clients returning, with last year's return in your tax software?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, send: A list of returning clients to roll over; Last year's returns in the software

Do you take on many new clients each season?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, send: A short yes/no questionnaire for new clients; A request for each new client's prior-year return

Do some clients refuse to create accounts or logins?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, send: A no-login route: fillable PDF or request link

Do you prepare business returns as well as individual returns?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, send: A separate organizer for each entity type

Number of organizers you expect to send this season

What the organizer must do

Based on: Your workflow

Do you need answers to flow into the return without retyping?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, send: The organizer module of your tax software

Should sections appear only after a related yes?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, send: A tool with conditional questions; The question tree written out

Do clients need to upload documents next to their answers?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, send: The list of documents expected from each client

Do you want reminders sent until every document arrives?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, send: Reminder schedule and wording; A follow-up email template

Security and consent

Based on: 16 CFR Part 314; Publication 4557; 26 CFR 301.7216-3

Do you have a written information security program?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, send: The current written plan; Name of the person who oversees it

Is client data encrypted in transit and at rest in every tool you use?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, send: Vendor security documentation for each tool

Do any clients still email organizers or documents?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, send: A secure upload route to give them instead

Will you use organizer answers for anything besides the return?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, send: A separate signed consent from each client

Sending and follow-up

Based on: Firm calendar

Do you send a cover letter with the organizer?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, send: This year's cover letter, with the return date filled in

Date the organizers go out

Date you need them back, ahead of your internal filing cut-off

Do you track which clients have not started their organizer?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, send: A tracker or report of open organizers

Does the e-file signature happen in a separate tool?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, send: Form 8879 process in your tax software or e-signature tool

Anything else your preparer should know