

How to get an ITIN in the United States through an acceptance agent

You apply for an ITIN on IRS Form W-7, and in the United States you can file it by mail, through an IRS acceptance agent, or at a Taxpayer Assistance Center.

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Who needs an ITIN

The IRS says you need an ITIN if you have a federal tax purpose and you are not eligible for a Social Security number (SSN). Form W-7 gives these reasons to apply:

- A nonresident alien who must get an ITIN to claim a tax treaty benefit.
- A nonresident alien who files a U.S. federal tax return.
- A U.S. resident alien, based on days present, who files a return.
- A dependent or a spouse of a U.S. citizen or resident alien.
- A nonresident alien student, professor, or researcher.
- A dependent or spouse of a nonresident alien who holds a U.S. visa.
- Other reasons.

What an ITIN does not do

An ITIN is for federal tax purposes only. The IRS says it does not qualify you for Social Security benefits or the Earned Income Tax Credit. It does not provide or change immigration status. It does not authorize you to work legally in the U.S.

Attach a tax return, or use an exception

Generally, you attach your original tax return to Form W-7. The instructions list five exceptions. Four of them cover passive income with third-party withholding or treaty benefits, other income with treaty benefits, mortgage interest, and sales of U.S. real property by a foreign person. Read the instructions to see if you qualify.

What an acceptance agent does

An acceptance agent (AA) can help you complete and file Form W-7. An AA must send original documents, or certified copies from the issuing agency, to the IRS.

A certifying acceptance agent (CAA) can verify original documents and certified copies. The CAA returns your documents right after review. For dependents, a CAA can verify only passports and birth certificates. A CAA must also attach Form W-7 (COA), the Certificate of

Accuracy, to each application.

Documents you need

If you submit an original valid passport, or a certified copy from the issuing agency, you do not need other documents. Otherwise you must submit at least two types of documents. The IRS lists 13 types. A certified copy is one that the original issuing agency provides and certifies as an exact copy.

Time and fees

The IRS says to allow 7 weeks for notice of your status. It can take 9 to 11 weeks from January 15 to April 30, or if you apply from overseas. The IRS lists Taxpayer Assistance Center ITIN service as free. It lists agent services as fee-based, and fees may vary. Ask each agent for the price.

Three ways to apply in the United States

1. **By mail.** Send the package to Internal Revenue Service, ITIN Operation, P.O. Box 149342, Austin, TX 78714-9342. You can also use a private delivery service.
2. **Through an agent.** Use an acceptance agent or a certifying acceptance agent.
3. **At a Taxpayer Assistance Center.** Call 844-545-5640 for an appointment. The IRS says it may take several weeks to get one.

Find an agent

The IRS lists acceptance agents by state on its [ITIN acceptance agents page](#). The list covers all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Choose your state and contact the agents you find there.

If your ITIN expires

An ITIN expires if you do not use it on a federal tax return for 3 consecutive tax years. You must renew an expired ITIN if you will include it on a U.S. federal tax return.

Get help

Call the IRS at 800-829-1040 from inside the United States.

Before you book

Confirm the current details with the agent and with the IRS before you book. This site is not affiliated with or endorsed by the IRS. The agent list data comes from the IRS.

Frequently asked questions

Does an ITIN let me work in the United States?

No. The IRS says an ITIN does not authorize you to work legally in the U.S. It also does not provide or change immigration status.

Do I need to attach a tax return to Form W-7?

Usually yes. The Form W-7 instructions list five exceptions to the requirement to include a federal tax return.

Can an acceptance agent keep my original passport?

A certifying acceptance agent can verify original documents and return them immediately. An ordinary acceptance agent must send originals or certified copies to the IRS.

How long does the IRS take?

The IRS says to allow 7 weeks. It can take 9 to 11 weeks during January 15 to April 30.

Sources

[IRS, Instructions for Form W-7 \(12/2024\)](https://www.irs.gov/instructions/iw7) — <https://www.irs.gov/instructions/iw7>

[IRS, Individual taxpayer identification number \(ITIN\)](https://www.irs.gov/individuals/individual-taxpayer-identification-number) — <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/individual-taxpayer-identification-number>

[IRS, How to apply for an ITIN](https://www.irs.gov/individuals/how-do-i-apply-for-an-itin) — <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/how-do-i-apply-for-an-itin>

[IRS, ITIN acceptance agents](https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/acceptance-agent-program) — <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/acceptance-agent-program>

[IRS, ITIN Acceptance Agent Program](https://www.irs.gov/individuals/itin-acceptance-agent-program) — <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/itin-acceptance-agent-program>

[IRS, Additional ITIN information](https://www.irs.gov/individuals/additional-itin-information) — <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/additional-itin-information>

[IRS, How to renew an ITIN](https://www.irs.gov/tin/itin/how-to-renew-an-itin) — <https://www.irs.gov/tin/itin/how-to-renew-an-itin>

This guide is about United States.