

How can an enrolled agent help me?

Enrolled agents advise, represent and prepare tax returns of individuals, partnerships, corporations, estates, trusts and any other entity with tax reporting requirements. EAs prepare millions of tax returns each year and their expertise in the continually changing field of taxation enables them to effectively represent taxpayers audited by the IRS.

Mr. Leonhard also offers ongoing, continual financial planning via his “Advanced Financial Life Support” product that includes the following element:

- Financial Strategic Plan
- Balance Sheet Prep & Analysis
- Personal Financial Review
- Tax Planning Analysis
- Income Tax Prep and Filing
- IRS Correspondence Assistance
- Education Planning and Funding.
- Retirement planning including health insurance planning.
- Basic Estate Planning



Robert Leonhard, Owner, VSFS

- Bachelor of Arts, The Ohio State University, 1987
- Master of Public Administration, The Ohio State University, 1992
- Lifetime member of the American Association of Individual Investors.
- Passed the two-day, 10 hour exam administered by the CFP® Board of Standards in March of 2009.
- State of Ohio Registered Investment Adviser
- Holds the Series 65 License
- Earned Enrolled Agent License, February, 2014
- Member: National Association of Enrolled Agents
- Member: National Association of Tax Professionals.
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Enrolled Agents

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What is an enrolled agent?

Enrolled agents (EAs) are America’s tax experts. EAs are the **only** federally-licensed tax practitioners who specialize in taxation and have **unlimited** rights to represent taxpayers before the Internal Revenue Service. **What are the differences between enrolled agents and other tax preparers?**

An enrolled agent is a person who has **earned the privilege of representing taxpayers before the Internal Revenue Service** by either passing a stringent, comprehensive examination covering individual and business tax returns and representation of clients before the IRS or through experience as a former IRS employee.

Enrolled agent status is the highest credential the IRS awards.

Individuals who obtain this elite status must adhere to ethical standards and enrolled agents, like attorneys and certified public accountants (CPAs), have unlimited practice rights. This means they are unrestricted as to which taxpayers they can represent, what types of tax matters they can handle, and which IRS offices they can represent clients before. But unlike attorneys and CPAs, who may or may not choose to specialize in taxes, all enrolled agents specialize in taxation. CPAs and attorneys are licensed by the states, but enrolled agents are federally licensed. That means they are not limited to practicing in states from which they have received a license; they can practice anywhere in the United States.

Are enrolled agents required to take continuing professional education?

In addition to the stringent testing and application process, the IRS requires enrolled agents to complete 72 hours of continuing education every three years to maintain their licenses. The National Association of Enrolled Agents (NAEA) raises the bar even further – its members are required to complete at least 90 hours in a three-year period.

Are there really that many tax changes each year that might affect me?

Yes. Every year there are numerous changes to the tax laws and tax code. IRS Code sections now number from 1 to over 9,899 and encompass more than 72,500 pages.

Frequently, provisions are added while others expire. Some are indexed for inflation, so they change as well. Some are effective at the beginning of the year while others become effective on the date a particular bill or law is signed.

Because the tax code is always changing, enrolled agents take continuing education courses each year to keep up with the changes and also have research tools at their disposal to monitor updates. Most taxpayers do not have the time or the research tools to read the volumes of material that are added to or deleted from the tax code each year.

What are the key points to remember when hiring a tax professional?

Your tax needs are best served by an enrolled agent. However, no matter who you hire there are certain things to keep in mind.

- Always use a qualified professional to prepare your return.
- Preparers should always sign the returns and include their Preparer Tax Identification Numbers (PTINs).
- Beware of preparers who encourage you to lie or otherwise modify your

information in order to get a bigger refund.

- The taxpayer is responsible for what's on a tax return. Reputable preparers will ask to see receipts and will ask multiple questions to determine whether expenses, deductions and other items qualify. By doing so, they are trying to help their clients avoid penalties, interest or additional taxes that could result from an IRS examination.

It is important to choose a tax professional, such as an enrolled agent, who keeps up with the rules and regulations and uses this expertise to do the best job possible for every taxpayer.

