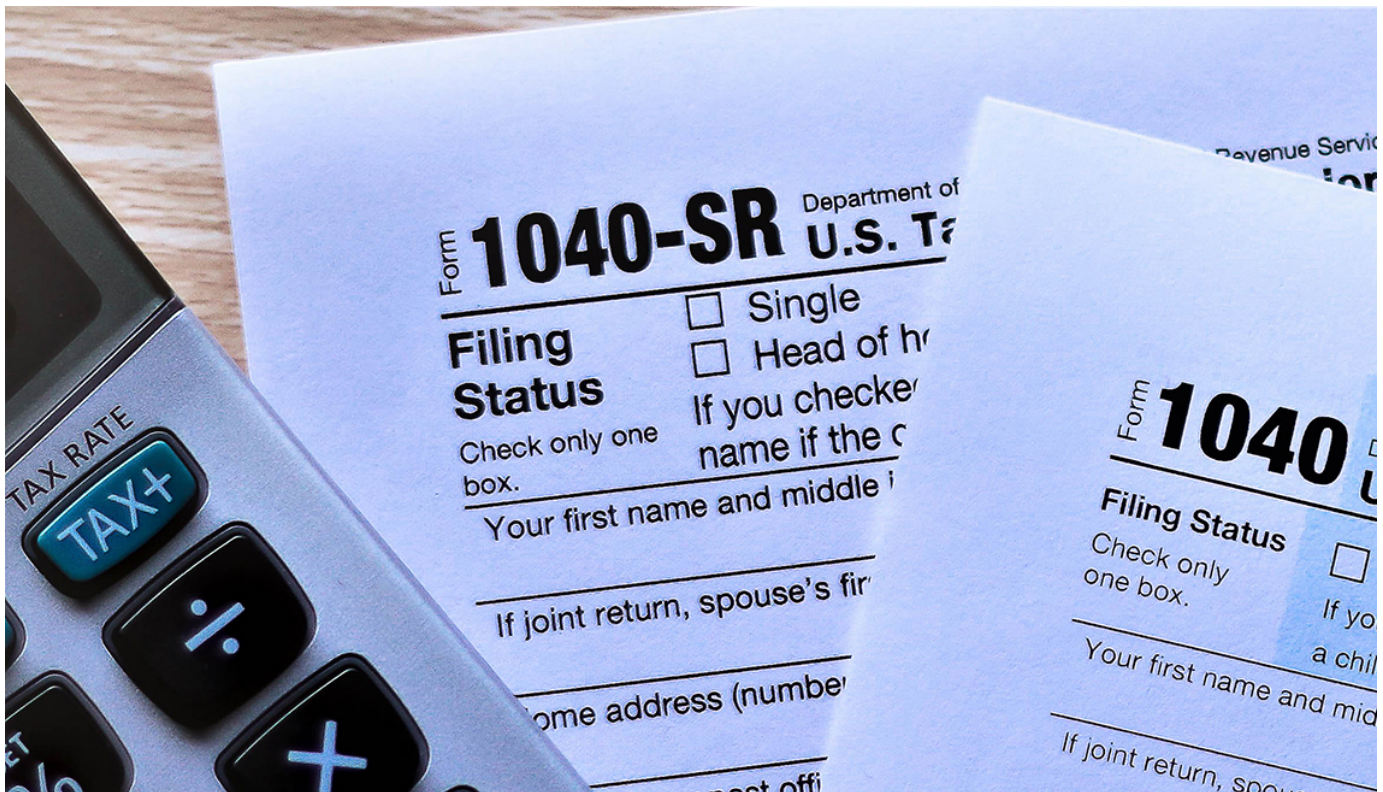


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Should I Use the 1040-SR Tax Return Form for Seniors?

Older taxpayers can benefit from bigger type and the prominent deduction chart.



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The Internal Revenue Service's new "U.S. Tax Return for Seniors" could make filing season a bit less taxing for some older taxpayers — provided you qualify to use it.

If you or your spouse were born before Jan. 2, 1955, you may be able to use [Form 1040-SR](#) instead of the more complicated Form 1040. (Note: You don't have to be retired to file the 1040-SR.) Both forms use the same "building block" approach introduced last year that can be supplemented with additional schedules as needed. Taxpayers with straightforward tax situations should need to file only Form 1040 or Form 1040-SR with no additional schedules.

The [senior tax return form generally follows the familiar 1040](#), albeit with slightly larger type for older eyes. It also has a chart for calculating your standard deduction — a good way to ensure that taxpayers 65 and older take the larger standard deduction to which they are entitled.

Congress mandated the 1040-SR because the previous simplified return, Form 1040-EZ, didn't accommodate some typical items for older taxpayers, such as Social Security benefits, IRA distributions, and pension and annuity payments. As such, older filers had to fill out the more complex 1040 form even though their returns weren't complicated. The 1040-SR does include those items. The 1040-EZ form is no longer in use.

Most tax-return software will generate a form 1040-SR; however, the form is most beneficial to filers who fill out paper returns by hand. If you use tax software to file taxes, as nearly 90 percent of taxpayers do, the software will choose which form is best for you. "If you are filing using a paper form, then there might be some benefit," says Henry Grzes, lead manager for tax practice and ethics at the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. "If you are using tax preparation software, it really doesn't matter."

----- Written by John Waggoner, AARP, January 21, 2020

AARP was founded in 1958 and has over 38 million members. It is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization for people over the age of 50. AARP is well-known for its advocacy efforts, providing its members with important information, products and services that enhance quality of life as they age. They also promote community service and keep members and the public informed on issues relating to the over 50 age group.

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