

Form 990 Checklist

To ensure your organization remains in good standing and avoids the steep daily fines associated with filing errors, you must systematically review your return for missing data or incorrect form types. The IRS frequently rejects filings due to simple oversights, such as failing to attach Schedule O for narrative explanations or neglecting to provide an authorized signature. By following the checklist below, you can streamline your review process, confirm that all required schedules are attached, and ensure your nonprofit tax compliance for small organizations is handled with the precision the IRS expects.

FORM 990 AND 990-EZ

- Check the accuracy of your Employer Identification Number, tax period, and Group Exemption Number (if applicable).
- Indicate the correct IRC subsection for the organization as indicated in the determination letter.
- Fully complete all parts of the core form.
- Complete all parts of Schedule A for Section 501(c)(3) or 4797(a)(1) organizations (and for 990-EZ filers, Part VI).
- Complete Schedule B (Schedule of Contributors), or certify it isn't required.
- Complete Schedule O (Supplemental Information) to provide narrative information required or supplement responses throughout the form.
- Complete fully and attach all other required lettered schedules determined for Form 990 by completing Part IV (Checklist of Required Schedules). (For Form 990-EZ, complete the trigger questions for Schedules A, B, C, E, G, and L throughout the form.)
- Answer "Yes" or "No" to each relevant question (unless otherwise instructed).
- Include an entry on all total lines, including zero (0) when appropriate.
- Omit any unnecessary personal-identifying information.
- Include the proper signature by an authorized officer of the organization.

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990-PF

- Complete all required parts by answering Yes, No, or N/A (not applicable) to each question.
- Complete all of Part II (Balance Sheet) columns A, B, and C if the foundation's total assets are \$5,000 or more at any time during the year. If less than \$5,000, all of columns A and B are required, but only line 16 of column C is required.
- Complete Part IX (Minimum Investment Return) if the organization is a domestic foundation, foreign foundation claiming status as a private operating foundation, or private operating foundation as described in the tax code.
- Complete Part XIV (Supplementary Information) if the foundation had assets of \$5,000 or more at any time during the year.
- Complete Schedule B (Schedule of Contributors), or certify it is not required by checking the box in Part I, Line 2.
- Omit personal-identifying information that is unnecessary.
- Include the proper signature by an authorized officer of your organization.

By integrating this checklist into your annual filing routine, you can significantly reduce the risk of IRS notices and the financial strain of late-filing penalties. Meticulous review is not just about staying compliant; it is about protecting your nonprofit's reputation and ensuring that your donors' contributions are used for your mission rather than administrative fines. Taking the extra time to verify every schedule and line item provides peace of mind that your IRS reporting requirements for 501c3 entities have been met with the highest level of accuracy and transparency.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this checklist is for educational purposes only and does not constitute legal, tax, or accounting advice. IRS regulations and Form 990 instructions are subject to change annually. Because tax laws are complex and depend on the specific facts of each organization, you should consult with a qualified tax professional, CPA, or legal counsel to ensure your specific filing meets all current federal and state requirements.