Tax Primer

IRS tax form reference guide for completing the Parents’ Financial Statement.
Introduction

Use this tax primer as a reference guide for understanding IRS tax forms that are most helpful to you as you complete your Parents’ Financial Statement (PFS) online.

Please keep in mind that this primer does not include an overview of every possible tax form you might receive or need to file with the IRS. It focuses, instead, on the main tax forms that families will need to have on hand to complete the PFS accurately and correctly.

Covered in this tax primer are these forms:

- Form W-2
- Form 1040
- Form 1040 Schedule 1
- Other Schedules
- Schedule C
- Form 1099-MISC

For each of these tax forms, the primer answers three questions:

1. What is the form used for?
2. What does the form look like?
3. Which lines on the form matter the most for completing the PFS?

Important

Be sure to send all your tax forms as required by each school you are applying to for financial aid. Do not limit what you submit to schools to the documents covered in this tax primer. If a school requires your tax forms and schedules, be sure to upload the full set of taxes that you submit to the IRS when filing your tax return. Doing so ensures that you complete each school’s document requirements correctly, avoiding possible delays in the process.
Form W-2

What is the W-2 for?

The W-2 is an annual statement of your earnings for the calendar year provided by your employer. It also displays how much was withheld from your pay for taxes, Social Security, and Medicare. This is where you can also see how much of your income was put into certain types of pre-tax retirement plans.

What does the W-2 look like?

Which Lines on the W-2 matter most for completing the PFS?

Report the salary in Box 1 of your W-2 on Line 7A of the PFS for the parent listed as “Parent A.” Use 7B for the parent listed as “Parent B.” Be sure to report the totals from all W-2s if either parent has more than one for the year.

Look at Box 12. If any amounts appear in this section with a code D-H, be sure to report that amount as “Payments to tax-deferred retirement plans” in PFS Line 8C of the Nontaxable Income Worksheet. If you have multiple W-2s, be sure to report the total amount.

You do not have to report any other information from the W-2 on the PFS. It is possible that one or more schools you’re applying to might ask you to supply other information from the W-2. You’ll most likely be required to submit or upload a copy of each W-2 you receive as part of your financial aid application.
What is the 1040 for?
The 1040 is used to report your sources of income, as well as any adjustments, deductions, and credits against your income that will determine how much and what types of federal taxes you should have paid for the tax year. If you’ve paid too much in taxes, it will show how much of a refund from the federal government you are entitled to receive. If you’ve paid too little in taxes, it will show how much more you need to pay.

What does the 1040 look like?
The 1040 is the base form. It can include additional schedules based on your income. Here’s the 1040 base form:
Which Lines on the 1040 matter most for completing the PFS?

Nearly every Line of the 1040’s Income section has a corresponding Line on the PFS where the income information should be reported. Most are straightforward one-to-one matches. However, a few lines warrant a little more guidance:

→ 1040 Page 1: Household Information

Be sure your tax filing status on PFS Line 6B matches what is checked off at the top of your 1040 form. An incorrect choice on the PFS can cause a miscalculation of the credit you receive for federal income taxes paid.

When listing your dependents on the PFS, make sure it is consistent with those listed on your 1040 Line 6C. If you support children or others in your household that you cannot claim as a dependent, be sure to list them and explain their relationship to you in the PFS “Other Considerations” section.

→ 1040 Page 1 Line 1: Salary/Wages

Salary and wages reported here are a total of salaries earned by the parents in the household. The PFS asks you to report each parent’s salary separately, so you won’t see a single Line item on the PFS for the total salaries. Be sure, though, that the total of the salaries you enter in Line 7A and 7B for each parent is the same as the total shown on Line 1 of your 1040 Page 1. Business owners must be careful not to report profit taken from the business as salary or wages. If you own a business and paid yourself or your spouse a salary from the business, and reported it with a W-2, only enter the amount of salary from the W-2 in Lines 7A or 7B.

→ 1040 Page 1 Lines 4a, 5a and 6a: Distributions from IRA, Pensions, and Social Security

1040 Lines 4a, 5a and 6a each show the total income you received from IRA, Pensions, and Social Security. Lines 4b, 5b and 6b show the taxable portion of those totals. Report taxable amount of IRA, Pensions and Annuities on PFS Line 7J/7K. Report Line 6b taxable amount of Social Security on PFS Line 7L.

To report the nontaxable portion correctly, take the difference and report it in the appropriate PFS line item in the Nontaxable Income section (PFS Section 8). Report your nontaxable Social Security benefits in PFS Line 8B.

→ 1040 Page 2: Other Taxes and payments

PFS Line 6H: Report 1040 Line 24 minus Schedule 2 Line 4
→ 1040 Page 2 Line 24

This shows what you owe for the different types of federal taxes on your income. PFS Line 6H asks you to report your federal taxes paid. Be sure to report the amount shown on 1040 Line 24. If you also have Self-Employment taxes reported on 1040 Schedule 2 Line 4, do not include those in PFS Line 6H, since you will report those separately for each business. If you paid self-employment taxes, for PFS Line 6H, report the total tax on Line 24 of Page 2 minus any Schedule 2 Line 4 Self-Employment tax.

→ 1040 Page 2 Line 27

Earned income credits shown here are considered non-taxable income and should be reported on PFS Line 8N.
What is the Schedule 1 for?

Schedule 1 is used to report additional income received such as capital gain, unemployment compensation, proprietorship business, corporation/partnerships, and rental income. Schedule 1 also list deductions from self-employment tax.

What does the Schedule 1 look like?

![Form 1040 Schedule 1](image-url)
Which Lines on Schedule 1 matter most for completing the PFS?

→ **1040 Line 3: Business income or (loss)**
   This refers specifically to income or loss you had from a Sole Proprietorship, for which you also completed a Schedule C. On Line 15-18 of the PFS, the total of the net profit or loss from each Schedule C business you own should equal the amount shown on your Sch 1 Line 3. Be sure to send or upload each Schedule C you file, if you have income or a loss listed on your 1040 Schedule 1 Line 3.

→ **1040 Line 5: Rental Real Estate, royalties, partnerships, S corporations, trusts, etc.**
   This Line can be complicated depending on what type of income is included here since many different types of income can be reported on your Schedule 1 Line 5.

   For income reported on Line 5 from rental property, trusts, or royalties, report the amount on 7q of your PFS.

   For income reported on Line 5 from S corporations or Partnerships that you share ownership in, report the amount on 7q of your PFS, then complete lines 15-18 of your PFS (the section that asks you to detail the income and expenses of the business). Reporting the amount in these two areas will not double-count it.

   Be sure to upload each Schedule E you file if you have income or loss listed on your 1040 Schedule 1 Line 5.

→ **1040 Schedule 1: Adjustments to Income**
   Be sure to report the total shown on Sch 1 Line 22 on PFS Line 7E. If you have adjustments in 1040 Lines 14, 15, or 19, report them in the proper lines on the PFS. If you have adjustments other than those three, be sure to leave a note in PFS item 7F to specify what the adjustments were for (e.g., “alimony paid” or “Educator expenses”).

**Important**

If you file a 1040 Schedule 1 and have reported income from rental real estate, partnerships, S-corporations (Line 5) or Business/Farm income (Line 3/6), please use our Tax Primer for Self-Employed Parents for further instruction on how to complete section 19 of the PFS.
Other Schedules

Which Lines matter most for completing the PFS?

→ Schedule A

If you filed a Schedule A, you itemized deductions and should say "Yes" to PFS Line 6G and report the amount on PFS Line 6H. If you did not itemize your deductions, say "No" to PFS 6G. No other questions on the PFS ask about any amounts in this section of the 1040.

If your itemized deductions include medical and/or dental expenses, look at your Schedule A Line 1. You can report the total medical and dental expenses shown there in PFS Line 14D. Don't itemize? You can still report your medical and dental expenses on PFS Line 14D even if you did not itemize them on a Schedule A.

→ 1040 Schedule 2 Line 4

Report the total amount of self-employment taxes you paid for your business(es). These should also be report on Line 17J on the PFS. Note that the PFS will ask you how much self-employment tax you paid for each business separately. The total of all of those self-employment tax amounts should be equal to what’s reported here on the Schedule 2 Line 4.
Schedule C

What is the Schedule C for?

The Schedule C is used for reporting specific details about each business you own for which you are the sole proprietor. It shows the name, location, and type of business. It details the total, gross income you received for the business. It itemizes the allowable expenses of the business that can be written off against the business’s income to ultimately show what your net profit or loss was on the business. The net profit or loss is then entered on your Form 1040 Schedule 1 on Line 3. When you submit your 1040 to the IRS, you are required to attach/include a Schedule C for each sole proprietorship you own.

What does the Schedule C look like?
**Which Lines on Schedule C matter most for completing the PFS?**

If you have a Schedule C, you have a Sole Proprietorship. On PFS Line 6H, answer “Yes.” You will be required to complete Section 15 for Business/Farm information.

On PFS Line 15C, select “Sole Proprietorship” and complete the questions about each business based on the income and expense information provided on the Schedule C. See below for guidance:

→ **Schedule C: Business Information and Income**

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**Important**

Complete a separate PFS section on income for every sole proprietorship you own.
### Schedule C: Business Expenses and Net Profit/Loss

**Part II: Expenses, Enter expenses for business use of your home only on line 30.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Car and truck expenses (see instructions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Commissions and fees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Contract labor (see instructions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Depletion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Depreciation and section 179 expense deduction (not included in Part III) (see instructions)</td>
<td>PFS Line 17F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Employee benefit programs (other than on line 18)</td>
<td>PFS Line 17C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Insurance (other than health)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Interest (see instructions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16a</td>
<td>Mortgage paid to bank, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Legal and professional services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17a</td>
<td>Other expenses (from line 48)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17b</td>
<td>Reserved for future use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Wages (less employment credits)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26a</td>
<td>Other expenses from line 48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26b</td>
<td>Wages paid for yourself and/or your spouse on Schedule C Line 26 includes wages paid for anyone other than yourself or your spouse</td>
<td>PFS Line 17A/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27a</td>
<td>Other expenses from line 48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27b</td>
<td>Wages paid for anyone other than yourself or your spouse</td>
<td>PFS Line 17A/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Total expenses before expenses for business use of home. Add lines 8 through 27a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Tentative profit or (loss). Subtract line 28 from line 7.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Expenses for business use of your home. Do not report these expenses elsewhere. Attach Form 8829 unless using the simplified method. See instructions. Simplified method filed only: Enter the total square footage of (a) your home, and (b) the part of your home used for business. Use the Simplified Method Worksheet in the instructions to figure the amount to enter on line 30.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Net profit or (loss). Subtract line 30 from line 29.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>If a profit, enter on both Schedule 1 (Form 1040), line 3, and on Schedule SE, line 2. (If you checked the box on line 1, see instructions). Estates and trusts, enter on Form 1041, line 3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32a</td>
<td>If a loss, you must go to line 32.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32b</td>
<td>If you have a loss, check the box that describes your investment in this activity. See instructions. If you checked 32a, enter the loss on both Schedule 1 (Form 1040), line 3, and on Schedule SE, line 2. If you checked the box on line 1, see the line 31 instructions. Estates and trusts, enter on Form 1041, line 3. If you checked 32b, you must attach Form 6198. Your loss may be limited.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Important**

Fill out a separate PFS section on expenses and net profit for every sole proprietorship you own.

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- **Look at Line 13:** If you are writing off any depreciation or “section 179 expense,” you will see an entry here. PFS Line 17F asks you to report this amount. If you claim depreciation, you likely also file a Form 4562. If you have a 4562, be sure to send or upload it with your tax forms. This allows the school to clarify how much of the amount on Line 13 is actual depreciation vs. “section 179 expense.” This is to your advantage, typically.

- **Look at Line 26:** If you paid wages to employees for your business (as reported on W2’s that you filed for them), the PFS will ask you to separate out any wages you paid for yourself or your spouse from wages you paid to others. If Schedule C Line 26 includes wages for yourself and/or your spouse, report the amount you paid to yourself and/or your spouse on PFS Line 17A. Only report this amount if you provided a W-2 as documentation of those earnings. Do NOT report your net profit as your salary.

If Schedule C Line 26 includes wages paid for anyone other than yourself or your spouse, report the amount that went to other employees on PFS Line 17B.

By definition, a sole proprietorship doesn’t share the profit or loss of the business with any other person or entity. Report the amount on Schedule C Line 31 on PFS Line 17L to reflect your share of the total business profit or loss (in other words, the amount that belongs to you).
Form 1099-MISC

What is Form 1099-MISC for?
The Form 1099-MISC is provided to you by a person or firm for whom you performed work or service by hiring yourself out as a freelancer, contractor, or the like. 1099s can also show other types of income such as royalties, commissions or rents. Basically, it shows income you earned that wasn’t provided to you as someone else’s employee or from your investments.

Other types of 1099s you might receive:

- 1099-DIV (which reports income from dividends, distributions, and capital gains from investments accounts such as stocks, bonds, and mutual funds)
- 1099-INT (which tracks interest income you earned from investments such as savings accounts).

What does the Form 1099-MISC look like?
Which Lines on Form 1099-MISC matter most for completing the PFS?

Income reported on your 1099s should already be included in certain lines of your 1040. On the PFS, any income reported on a 1099-MISC (other than rents and royalties) should be reported on PFS Line 7S.

If you and/or your spouse received multiple 1099s, be sure to add the amounts and report the total income on PFS Line 7S.

**Important**

- Do not report any amounts reported on a 1099-MISC as salary or wages, even if you earned it by working for someone as a contractor, freelancer, etc. When reporting your salary or wages on the PFS, ONLY include income for which you received a W-2.

- Many schools will require you to submit a W-2 as part of your financial aid application. If you didn’t receive a W-2 (meaning you didn’t earn a salary as someone else’s employee), but you did receive a 1099-MISC as a contractor or freelancer, submit your 1099-MISC in place of the W-2 the school requires.