



# Preparing for life's important moments

Reviewed November 2019



## Life is complicated.

- You may encounter several financial milestones during your lifetime:
  - Marriage
  - Children
  - Divorce
  - College
  - Retirement
- One significant recurring financial event is your annual tax return, which often is overlooked as a resource for planning.

## Tax planning is more than just April 15.

- Most financial events — significant and routine — have tax consequences.
- Most people only think about their taxes leading up to the due date.
- CPAs are trusted advisers who assist with a variety of financial issues and their tax consequences year-round.

## A CPA's approach

- Take a holistic view of financial concerns and opportunities, using your tax return as a guide.
- Integrate tax considerations into your entire financial picture.
- Consider how certain financial decisions affect other areas of life — retirement, paying for college, aging parents, etc.
- Implement strategies to resolve immediate issues and proactively identify opportunities for the long term.
- Apply objectivity, integrity and diligence you expect from a CPA.



# Navigating the tax services marketplace

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- Factors to differentiate between various tax return preparers:
  - Training/experience
  - License
  - References
  - Approach
- Where CPAs provide additional value



# The CPA credential

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- College degree (150 semester hours)
- Rigorous four-part Uniform CPA Examination (14 hours)
- 40 hours of continuing professional education each year

How are CPAs different from other tax preparers?

- Licensed by state board of accountancy

# How is a CPA different from an unlicensed preparer?

Key areas of difference:

- **Practice rights** — CPAs have **unlimited** practice rights before the IRS.
- **Oversight** — Neither a state board nor the IRS regulate other preparers (except enrolled agents and attorneys).
- **Ethical rules** — CPAs who belong to the AICPA are also bound by its Code of Conduct and Statements on Standards for Tax Services (in addition to other rules).



# Value of a CPA

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- Assistance understanding complex tax law (including recent changes)
- Long-term tax planning (and saving)
- A broad base of knowledge with specialized training
- Holistic approach to client's finances



## Beyond tax season

- Year-round financial planning services around tax, retirement, estate, risk management and investments
- Can assist with major life changes in a wide variety of ways
- Provides a single point of contact for all a client's financial needs
- Honesty and integrity — keystones of the profession



Thank you