Head of Household

For the specific requirements that must be met to qualify for head of household (HOH) filing status, get FTB Pub. 1540, California Head of Household Filing Status. In general, head of household filing status is for unmarried individuals and certain married individuals or RDPs living apart who provide a home for a specified relative. You may be entitled to use head of household filing status if **all** of the following apply:

- You were unmarried and not in a registered domestic partnership, or you met the requirements to be considered unmarried or considered not in a registered domestic partnership on December 31, 2016.
- You paid more than one-half the cost of keeping up your home for the year in 2016.
- For more than half the year, your home was the main home for you and one of the specified relatives who by law can qualify you for head of household filing status.
- You were not a nonresident alien at any time during the year.

For a child to qualify as your foster child for head of household purposes, the child must either be placed with you by an authorized placement agency or by order of a court.

California requires taxpayers who use head of household filing status to file form FTB 3532, Head of Household Filing Status Schedule to report how the HOH filing status was determined.

For more information, get FTB Pub. 1540 at **ftb.ca.gov** or see code **934** on page 87 to order FTB Pub.1540 by telephone.

Qualifying Widow(er) with Dependent Child

Check the box on Form 540, line 5 and use the joint return tax rates for 2016 if **all** five of the following apply:

- Your spouse/RDP died in 2014 or 2015 and you did not remarry or enter into another registered domestic partnership in 2016.
- You have a child, stepchild, adopted child, or foster child whom you claim as a dependent.
- This child lived in your home for all of 2016. Temporary absences, such as for vacation or school, count as time lived in the home.
- You paid over half the cost of keeping up your home for this child.
- You could have filed a joint tax return with your spouse/RDP the year he or she died, even if you actually did not do so.

What's New and Other Important Information for 2016

Differences between California and Federal Law

In general, for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2015, California law conforms to the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) as of January 1, 2015. However, there are continuing differences between California and federal law. When California conforms to federal tax law changes, we do not always adopt all of the changes made at the federal level. For more information, go to **ftb.ca.gov** and search for **conformity**. Additional information can be found in FTB Pub. 1001, Supplemental Guidelines to California Adjustments, the instructions for California Schedule CA (540), and the Business Entity tax booklets.

The instructions provided with California tax forms are a summary of California tax law and are only intended to aid taxpayers in preparing their state income tax returns. We include information that is most useful to the greatest number of taxpayers in the limited space available. It is not possible to include all requirements of the California Revenue and Taxation Code (R&TC) in the instructions. Taxpayers should not consider the instructions as authoritative law.

Conformity – For updates regarding federal acts, go to **ftb.ca.gov** and search for **conformity**.

2016 Tax Law Changes/What's New

Voluntary Contributions – You may contribute to the following new funds:

- Revive the Salton Sea Fund
- California Domestic Violence Victims Fund
- Special Olympics Fund
- Type 1 Diabetes Research Fund

Low-Income Housing Credit Allocations to Partners – For partnerships owning projects that receive a preliminary reservation of the Low-Income Housing Credit (LIHC) before January 1, 2020, the prior law exception that requires a partnership to allocate the credit among partners based upon the partnership agreement is re-enacted.

Sale of Credit – For projects that receive a preliminary reservation of the LIHC beginning on or after January 1, 2016, and before January 1, 2020, a taxpayer may make an irrevocable election in its application to the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee to sell all or any portion of the LIHC allowed to one or more unrelated parties for each taxable year in which the credit is allowed. An original purchaser is allowed a one-time resale of that credit to one or more unrelated parties. For more information, get form FTB 3521, Low-Income Housing Credit, or go to the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee website at **treasurer.ca.gov/ctcac**.

California Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Program – For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2016, the California Qualified ABLE Program was established and California generally conforms to the federal income tax treatment of ABLE accounts. This program was established to help blind or disabled people save money in a tax-favored ABLE account to maintain health, independence, and quality of life. Additional information can be found in the instructions of Form 3805P, Additional Taxes on Qualified Plans (Including IRAs) and Other Tax-Favored Accounts.

New California Motion Picture and Television Production Credit – For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2016, a **new** California motion picture and television production credit will be allowed to a qualified taxpayer. The credit is allocated and certified by the California Film Commission (CFC). The qualified taxpayer can:

- Offset the credit against income tax liability.
- Sell the credit to an unrelated party (independent films only).
- Assign the credit to an affiliated corporation.
- Apply the credit against qualified sales and use taxes.

For more information, get form FTB 3541, California Motion Picture and Television Production Credit, form FTB 3551, Sale of Credit Attributable to an Independent Film, go to **ftb.ca.gov** and search for **motion picture**, or go to the CFC website at **film.ca.gov** and search for **incentives**.

Native American Income – California does not tax reservation sourced income earned or received from the same Indian country in which you live and are an enrolled member. Additional information can be found in the instructions for California Schedule CA (540) and form FTB 3504, Enrolled Tribal Member Certification.

Other Important Information

Electronic Funds Withdrawal (EFW) – Make extension or estimated tax payments using tax preparation software. Check with your software provider to determine if they support EFW for extension or estimated tax payments.

Earned Income Tax Credit – For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2015, the refundable California Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is available to taxpayers who earned wage income within California. This credit is similar to the federal Earned Income Credit (EIC). This credit is available to taxpayers with earned income of less than $14,162. Additional information can be found on California Form FTB 3514 - California Earned Income Tax Credit.

Payments and Credits Applied to Use Tax – For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2015, if a taxpayer includes use tax on their personal income tax return, payments and credits will be applied to use tax first, then towards income tax, interest, and penalties. Additional information can be found in the instructions for California Form 540.

Dependent Social Security Number (SSN) – For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2015, taxpayers claiming an exemption credit must write each dependent's SSN in the spaces provided within Line 10 for the California Form 540 and California Form 540NR (long and short).

Financial Incentive for Seismic Improvement – For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2015, taxpayers can exclude from gross income any amount received as loan forgiveness, grant, credit, rebate, voucher, or other financial incentive issued by the California Residential Mitigation Program or the California Earthquake Authority to assist a residential property owner or occupant with expenses paid, or obligations incurred, for earthquake loss mitigation. Additional information can be found in the instructions for California Schedule CA (540 and 540NR).

Natural Heritage Preservation Credit – For qualified contributions made on or after January 1, 2015, the credit carryover period has been extended to 15 years or until exhausted, whichever occurs first. Any unused credits remaining before January 1, 2015, will remain subject to an eight-year carryover provision. In addition, the period for when a qualified contribution is made, for which a tax credit will be allowed, has been extended to June 30, 2020.

Disaster Losses – For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2014, and before January 1, 2024, taxpayers may deduct a disaster loss for any loss sustained in any city, county, or city and county in California that is proclaimed by the Governor to be in a state of emergency. For these Governor-only declared disasters, subsequent state legislation is not required to activate the disaster loss provisions. Additional information can be found in the instructions for California form FTB 3805V, Net Operating Loss (NOL) Computation and NOL and Disaster Loss Limitations – Individuals, Estates, and Trusts.

Head of Household – For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2015, California requires taxpayers who use head of household (HOH) filing status to file form FTB 3532 – Head of Household Filing Status Schedule, to report how the HOH filing status was determined.

Financial Incentive for Turf Removal – For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2014, and before January 1, 2019, taxpayers can exclude from gross income any amount received as a rebate, voucher, or other financial incentive issued by a local water agency or supplier for participation in a turf removal water conservation program. Additional information can be found in the instructions for California Schedule CA (540 and 540NR).

Penalty Assessed by Professional Sports League – For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2014, an owner of all or part of a professional sports franchise will not be allowed a deduction for the amount of any fine or penalty paid or incurred, that was assessed or imposed by the professional sports league that includes that franchise. Additional information can be found in the instructions for California Schedule CA (540 and 540NR).

New Employment Credit – For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2014, and before January 1, 2021, the New Employment Credit (NEC) is available to a qualified taxpayer that hires a qualified full-time employee on or after January 1, 2014, and pays or incurs qualified wages attributable to work performed by the qualified full-time employee in a designated census tract or economic development area, and receives a **tentative credit reservation** for that qualified full-time employee. In addition, an **annual certification of employment** is required with respect to each qualified full-time employee hired in a previous taxable year. In order to be allowed a credit, the qualified taxpayer must have a net increase in the total number of full-time employees in California. Any credits not used in the taxable year may be carried forward up to five years. If a qualified employee is terminated within the first 36 months after beginning employment, the employer may be required to recapture previously taken credits. For more information, go to **ftb.ca.gov** and search for **nec** or get form FTB 3554, New Employment Credit.

Repeal of Geographically Targeted Economic Development Area Tax Incentives – The California legislature repealed and made changes to all of the Geographically Targeted Economic Development Area (G-TEDA) Tax Incentives. Enterprise Zones (EZ) and Local Agency Military Base Recovery Areas (LAMBRA) were repealed on January 1, 2014. The Targeted Tax Areas (TTA) and Manufacturing Enhancement Areas (MEA) both expired on December 31, 2012. For more information, go to **ftb.ca.gov** and search for **repeal tax incentives**.

California Competes Tax Credit – For taxable years beginning on and after January 1, 2014, and before January 1, 2025, the California Competes Tax Credit is available to businesses that want to come to California or stay and grow in California. Tax credit agreements will be negotiated by the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) and approved by the California Competes Tax Credit Committee. The California Competes Tax Credit only applies to state income or franchise tax. Taxpayers who are awarded a contract by the committee will claim the credit on their income or franchise tax returns using credit code 233. The credit can reduce tax below the tentative minimum tax. Any credits not used in the taxable year may be carried forward up to six years. For more information, go to the GO-Biz website at **business.ca.gov** or **ftb.ca.gov** and search for **ca competes** or get form FTB 3531, California Competes Tax Credit.

Like-Kind Exchanges – For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2014, California requires taxpayers who exchange property located in California for like-kind property located outside of California, and meet all of the requirements of the Internal Revenue Code Section 1031, to file an annual information return with the Franchise Tax Board (FTB). For more information, get form FTB 3840, California Like-Kind Exchanges, or go to **ftb.ca.gov** and search for **like kind**.

College Access Tax Credit – For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2014, and before January 1, 2017, a credit is available to taxpayers who contribute to the College Access Tax Credit Fund. Taxpayers who receive a certificate from the California Educational Facilities Authority (CEFA) may claim the credit on their income or franchise tax returns using credit code 235. The CEFA will provide a copy of each credit certificate issued, to the Franchise Tax Board (FTB). Any credits not used in the taxable year may be carried forward up to six years. For more information, go to **treasurer.ca.gov/cefa** or get form FTB 3592, College Access Tax Credit.

Cancellation of Debt Income (CODI) – For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2014, and before January 1, 2019, California did not conform to the federal recognition of business debt reacquisition CODI under IRC Section 108(i). If you recognized the CODI for federal tax purposes, then you must deduct the federal CODI amount. See Sch. CA (540) line 12 instructions for more information.

Net Operating Loss (NOL) Carryback – NOLs incurred in taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2013, shall be carried back to each of the preceding two taxable years.

The allowable NOL carryback percentage varies. For an NOL incurred in a taxable year beginning on or after:

- January 1, 2013, and before January 1, 2014, the carryback amount shall not exceed 50% of the NOL.
- January 1, 2014, and before January 1, 2015, the carryback amount shall not exceed 75% of the NOL.
- January 1, 2015, the carryback amount shall be 100% of the NOL.

Individuals, Estates, and Trusts compute the NOL carryback in Part IV of form FTB 3805V. For more information, get form FTB 3805V.

Election to Waive Carryback – Any taxpayer entitled to a carryback period pursuant to Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 172(b)(3) may elect to relinquish/waive the entire carryback period with respect to an NOL incurred in the 2013 taxable year. By making the election, the taxpayer is electing to carry an NOL forward instead of carrying it back in the previous two years.

To make the election, check the box in Part I under Section C – Election to Waive Carryback, of form FTB 3805V, and attach form FTB 3805V to the tax return. For more information, get form FTB 3805V.

Mandatory Electronic Payments – You are required to remit all your payments electronically once you make an estimate or extension payment exceeding $20,000 or you file an original tax return with a total tax liability over $80,000. Once you meet this threshold, all subsequent payments regardless of amount, tax type, or taxable year must be remitted electronically. The first payment that would trigger the mandatory e-pay requirement does not have to be made electronically. Individuals that do not send the payment electronically will be subject to a 1% noncompliance penalty.

You can request a waiver from mandatory e-pay if one or more of the following is true:

- You have not made an estimated tax or extension payment in excess of $20,000 during the current or previous taxable year.
- Your total tax liability reported for the previous taxable year did not exceed $80,000.
- The amount you paid is not representative of your total tax liability.

For more information or to obtain the waiver form, go to **ftb.ca.gov** and search for **mandatory epay**. Electronic payments can be made using Web Pay on FTB's website, electronic funds withdrawal (EFW) as part of the e-file return, or your credit card.

Estimated Tax Payments – Taxpayers are required to pay 30% of the required annual payment for the 1st required installment, 40% of the required annual payment for the 2nd required installment, no installment is due for the 3rd required installment, and 30% of the required annual payment for the 4th required installment.

Taxpayers with a tax liability less than $500 ($250 for married/RDP filing separately) do not need to make estimated tax payments.

Mortgage Forgiveness Debt Relief – California law does not conform to federal law regarding the discharge of indebtedness from the disposition of your principal residence occurring on or after January 1, 2014. For more information, get Schedule CA (540).

Backup Withholding – With certain limited exceptions, payers that are required to withhold and remit backup withholding to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) are also required to withhold and remit to the FTB on income sourced to California. If the payee has backup withholding, the payee must contact the FTB to provide a valid taxpayer identification number, before filing the tax return. Failure to provide a valid taxpayer identification number may result in a denial of the backup withholding credit. For more information, go to **ftb.ca.gov** and search for **backup withholding**.

Registered Domestic Partners (RDP) – Under California law, RDPs must file their California income tax return using either the married/RDP filing jointly or married/RDP filing separately filing status. RDPs have the same legal benefits, protections, and responsibilities as married couples unless otherwise specified.

If you entered into a same sex legal union in another state, other than a marriage, and that union has been determined to be substantially equivalent to a California registered domestic partnership, you are required to file a California income tax return using either the married/RDP filing jointly or married/RDP filing separately filing status.

For purposes of California income tax, references to a spouse, husband, or wife also refer to a California RDP, unless otherwise specified. When we use the initials RDP they refer to both a California registered domestic "partner" and a California registered domestic "partnership," as applicable. For more information on RDPs, get FTB Pub. 737, Tax Information for Registered Domestic Partners.

Direct Deposit Refund – You can request a direct deposit refund on your tax return whether you e-file or file a paper tax return. Be sure to fill in the routing and account numbers carefully and double-check the numbers for accuracy to avoid it being rejected by your bank.

Direct Deposit for ScholarShare 529 College Savings Plans – If you have a ScholarShare 529 College Savings Plan account maintained by the ScholarShare Investment Board, you may have your refund directly deposited to your ScholarShare account.

California Disclosure Obligations – If the individual was involved in a reportable transaction, including a listed transaction, the individual may have a disclosure requirement. Attach federal Form 8886, Reportable Transaction Disclosure Statement, to the back of the California tax return along with any other supporting schedules. If this is the first time the reportable transaction is disclosed on the tax return, send a duplicate copy of the federal Form 8886 to the address below. The FTB may impose penalties if the individual fails to file federal Form 8886, or fails to provide any other required information. A material advisor is required to provide a reportable transaction number to all taxpayers and material advisors for whom the material advisor acts as a material advisor.

TAX SHELTER FILING
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For more information, go to **ftb.ca.gov** and search for **disclosure obligation.**