



### Dear Savvy Living,

What are the IRS filing requirements this year? I had to file income tax returns last year, but my income dropped a bit and I'm wondering if I may be off the hook this year. What can you tell me?

— Tired of Taxes

### Dear Tired,

You won't have to file an income tax return this year if your income falls under the IRS filing requirements. Here's a breakdown of the 2010 filing requirements along with a few other tax tips you should know.

## SAVVY LIVING

By: Jim Miller

#### eFILING REQUIREMENTS

If your "gross income" is below the IRS filing limits, you probably don't have to file a federal tax return. Gross income includes all the income you receive that is not exempt from tax, not including Social Security benefits, unless you are married and filing separately. You probably don't have to file this year if:

- You are single and your 2010 gross income was less than \$9,350 (\$10,750 if you're 65 or older).
- You are married filing jointly and your gross income was under \$18,700. If you or your spouse is 65 or older, the limit increases to \$19,800. And if you're both over 65, your income must be under \$20,900 to not file.
- You are head of household and your gross income was below \$12,000 (\$13,400 if age 65 or older).
- You are married filing separately and

your income was less than \$3,650.

- You are a qualifying widow(er) with a dependent child and your gross income was less than \$15,050 (\$16,150 if age 65 or older).

#### REQUIRED FILING

There are some special financial situations that require you to file a tax return, even if your gross income falls below the IRS filing requirement. For example, if you had net earnings from self-employment in 2010 of \$400 or more, or if you owe any special taxes to the IRS such as alternative minimum tax or IRA tax penalties, you'll probably need to file.

To figure this out, the IRS offers a page on their website called "Do You Need to File a Federal Income Tax Return?" that includes a list of financial situations and a series of questions that will help you determine if you're required to file, or if

you should file (if you're due a refund). You can access this page at [www.doyouneedtofile.info](http://www.doyouneedtofile.info), or you can get help over the phone by calling the IRS helpline at 800-829-1040.

#### CHECK YOUR STATE

Even if you're not required to file a federal tax return this year, it doesn't necessarily mean you're also excused from filing state income taxes. Check on that with your state tax agency before concluding you're entirely in the clear. For links to state and local tax agencies see [taxadmin.org](http://taxadmin.org) – click on "Links."

Savvy Living is written by Jim Miller, a regular contributor to the NBC Today Show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book. Any links in this article are offered as a service and there is no endorsement of any product.



United Way  
of Santa Barbara County  
[www.unitedwaysb.org](http://www.unitedwaysb.org)

WILLS, BEQUESTS & TRUSTS

# THE LEGACY NEWS

## CREATE YOUR PLAN

"A GOAL WITHOUT A PLAN  
IS JUST A WISH."

Antoine de Saint Exupery

**While we would never attend a Broadway musical without a ticket or take a trip without luggage, most Americans have not taken the time to plan for their future.**

We simply never get around to doing it. The result is disappointing. When we fail to plan, our dreams, wishes and hopes may never be fully realized. Unfortunately, this also means our family and beneficiaries experience the expense and frustration of estate administration. A few months of probate can destroy what it took a lifetime to create. Don't let this happen to you or your family.

The good news is that planning is easy and rewarding. In the following pages, we'll show how simple and enjoyable it can be. In less time than it takes to choose and arrange a summer vacation, you can complete a plan that outlines your goals and lets your family and friends know the values you hold dearly. Take the time to plan your life, your future, and your legacy. You will be glad you did, and every day thereafter, you can expect the peace and comfort of knowing the life you live today will matter tomorrow.



PLANNING IS

# EASY



Creating a plan can be easy when you use our new online **Wills Planner**. It helps you organize information about your family, estate and goals that will then be provided to your attorney for developing your plan. The online **Wills Planner**, available on our website, will guide you step-by-step through the simple process of identifying what you have and what you want done with it. During the process, most people discover that planning is less about “things” and more about values.

Perhaps the best feature of our **Wills Planner** is that it helps you identify your goals, dreams, and aspirations for the future. Your will is not so much a plan for what happens after you are gone but more about a testament of how you live today. When you are finished entering your information into the online **Wills Planner**, you can choose to share the information with your attorney. This planner will be an invaluable tool for your attorney who can then complete your plan, and ensure that your wishes, goals and dreams are followed. We have even identified GiftAttorneys in your area who are familiar with the planner to make it even easier for you to complete your will.

Even if you don't think you have many belongings, your life's dreams and values are worth preserving. With our new online **Wills Planner**, you have the opportunity to take the first step to embarking on one of the most fulfilling and satisfying adventures in your life.



**ESTATE PLANNING IS LESS ABOUT “THINGS”  
AND MORE ABOUT VALUES.**

## PLAN TO CARE BY CARING TO

# PLAN

While there are plenty of perils for not having a will or estate plan, there are great rewards for those who do have one. For those who plan, there is a comfort and satisfaction in knowing that love for family and friends will continue for years to come. And property enjoyed today will be preserved and appreciated tomorrow. There is another benefit, too. Many individuals who have a will also include a provision in their plan for their favorite charity that is similar to ours.

Including a charitable organization in your will has many benefits for you. Perhaps most importantly, it demonstrates and affirms that the donations and support you have shown during your life will be transformed into a lasting legacy.

When you include a gift to United Way in your will, you are telling yourself, your family and the world that what you do, and what we will do together is important and significant for all time. Your family will see that the works and loves of your life will be lasting. There is also another benefit that you and your heirs will appreciate. When you include a gift to our mission in your plan, your estate benefits from an estate tax charitable deduction.

Your life matters and your wishes count. Use our **Wills Planner** to identify those values and people that are important to you. Rather than leaving questions of what you would have done or would have liked to do, you leave a lasting legacy. It's one that clearly demonstrates a commitment that will last beyond your years, but not beyond your reach. Call or email us today and let's get started.



**“IT IS BETTER TO LOOK AHEAD AND PREPARE  
THAN TO LOOK BACK AND REGRET.”**

JACKIE JOYNER-KERSEE

**United Way  
of Santa Barbara County**



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