

# Tax Time Planning Checklist



The following steps help you to plan how to incorporate the Save for College Program into your free tax preparation flow and help tax filers split part of their refund to their college savings account. Splitting a refund only takes a couple minutes and does not drastically change the length or course of a tax preparation!

## 1. Define Staffing Needs

Define which roles you will need to fit splitting tax refund services into your tax preparation flow. These will likely include the following (but based on your tax prep flow you might also need additional or different roles):

- Intake - this person will identify eligible individuals during intake and inform them about the opportunity to split part of a tax refund into a college savings account.
- Tax Preparer - the person conducting the tax refund with tax filers.
- Financial Counselor - having a financial counselor on site during tax prep who can explain the benefits of the Save for College Program to parents and support families in completing the Building Blocks can increase service uptake. In addition, financial counselors can identify eligible families before the start of the tax season and promote splitting tax refund services to them. **Note:** it is not necessary to have a financial counselor to support families to open their own savings account as long as there is a designated staff member to provide support.
- Other -
- Other -
- Other -

## 2. Conduct Outreach

Advertise splitting tax refund services early in the tax season when families start to make plans on how to use their refunds. Use outreach language provided on page 46 of the playbook to integrate information on splitting tax refund services into your existing outreach materials (e.g. flyers, brochures, posters etc.).

## 3. Incorporate Information into Relevant Services

If you offer related services such as employment or financial counseling, incorporate information on splitting tax refund services and the Save for College Program. This provides an easy way for families to put aside money for their children's future education.

## 4. Incorporate Information into the Intake and Appointment-Making Process

The appointment-making and intake procedures for free tax preparation services present key opportunities to identify eligible parents, provide information on splitting tax refunds services, and get clients interested in using this as an opportunity to save for their children's future education.

## 5. Prepare for Building Block Assistance during Wait Times

Waiting times between intake and tax preparation can be used to provide more information and help interested parents to open an account.

## 6. (Optional): Connect Clients to Financial Counseling Resources

Prepare tax preparers to connect parents to available resources around budgeting to help build a general savings plan or college savings plan. These resources can include financial counseling services offered at your organization or a partner, or written materials and tools that help families to start saving.