TAX PREPARER CHECKLIST

☐ **STEP 1.** Ask to see the client's photo ID and SS Cards/ITIN for everyone on the return and check all their paperwork
- Ensure that the return you are preparing is in scope for the program and within your certification level
- Look to see that the top of the ProSeries TAP Client Data Sheet was filled in (including site name and date)
- Look at the IRS Form 13614-C to ensure that all "Unsure" responses in Parts III, IV, or V are corrected to say "Yes" or "No" and that all grey boxes have been completed.
- Check to see that the Ladder Up Client Agreement has been signed and dated before you prepare the return.

☐ **STEP 2.** Make sure the computer is connected to the correct Ladder Up network (offline), and open ProSeries for the Tax Year the client wishes to prepare.
- Start a new client file by going to the top left-hand corner and clicking *File > New Client*.
- If the client had their return prepared by Ladder Up at a ProSeries site last year, you will **transfer** their file forward. (See *Mini Manual: Transferring Client Files*)
- Turn CAPS LOCK on.

☐ **STEP 3.** Complete the Federal Information Worksheet using Form 13614-C (IRS Intake Sheet).
- Part I – Personal Information (enter names exactly as they appear on Social Security cards or ITIN letters)
- Part II – Filing Status (See *Mini Manual: Filing Status*). **Note**: Find out if the client was ever married – if they do not have legal paperwork for a separation or divorce, they may still be considered married.
- Part III – Dependents (See *Mini Manual: Summary of Dependency Requirements* chart). **Note**: Find out if the client lives with anyone else to determine if they truly pay > 50% of household expenses and that no one else can be claimed as a dependent. Be sure to complete all grey boxes on IRS Form 13614-C for all dependents.
- Part IV – Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Information – complete the yes/no questions and check any that apply.
- **Part V – SKIP** (If a client file has been transferred from a different tax site, please make sure to change the preparer code from Firm/Preparer Info box. See *Mini Manual: Site Codes*)
- Part VI – Confirm e-file or paper file with the client (only current tax year and one-year-prior returns can be e-filed. Amendments can never be e-filed.)
  - Identity Protection PIN: If taxpayer or spouse has received an Identity Protection PIN, enter their current tax year PIN here
  - Date PIN Entered: If client is e-filing, you will then be prompted to enter today's date
- **Part VII – SKIP ALL**
- Part VIII – Direct Deposit (if applicable, otherwise leave blank).
  - Clients who do not have account information have the option of opening a CFR card
  - If a client wants to split their refund into multiple accounts or purchase US Savings Bonds, quick zoom to Form 8888 from this section.
- Part IX – **SKIP ALL** (Ladder Up does not offer Electronic Funds Withdrawal Options to clients)
- Part X – Additional Federal Return Information. Fill in appropriate boxes based on the client's IRS Form 13614-C
  - Skip down and start with "Education Expenses" (check if client or spouse has qualified education expenses)
  - End after filling in response Yes/No for "Credit for Elderly or Disabled")
- Part XI – **SKIP ALL** (Ladder Up only prepares state returns for full-year Illinois residents)
- Part XII – **SKIP ALL**

(turn over)

STUCK? ***Detailed step-by-step instructions for ALL of these steps and forms are available in the ProSeries Tax Manual.***
This and other tools can be found in the Resource folder on your laptop's desktop or printed at the tax site.

TAX PREPARER CHECKLIST

☐ **STEP 4.** Save the client's file in the designated site folder on the **Z:** drive, **inside the tax site folde**r and **outside of the date folder**, by going to the top left-hand corner and clicking *File > Save Client*.
  - ➢ If you're unsure where to save the file, please ask your Site Manager or a more experienced volunteer.
  - ➢ Continue to save frequently as you work on the file, so that you do not lose any work if the software or computer unexpectedly crashes.

☐ **STEP 5.** Enter all tax documents provided by the taxpayer. Double check IRS Form 13614-C to make sure all types of income are accounted for. We cannot prepare a return with missing documents.
  - Use the yellow ***"Where Do I Enter?" Cheat Sheet*** to find where to enter each tax form into ProSeries.
  - Generally, all boxes on tax documents that contain numbers must be entered into ProSeries.
  - ProSeries will indicate required fields in red.
  - ***Note***: If the client has income from another state, ask the Site Manager for further guidance.

☐ **STEP 6.** Enter any relevant deductions and credits.
ProSeries automatically calculates most credits and deductions. However, you will have to indicate a taxpayer's eligibility for certain credits and deductions.
  - ➢ For a list of credits and deductions that are in scope and how to enter them, refer to the *ProSeries Tax Manual*
  - ➢ Itemized Deductions on Schedule A: Schedule A is commonly used by taxpayers who own a home and pay real estate taxes. Taxpayers typically know if they itemize and will have proof of all relevant expenses. ProSeries will always take the most advantageous deduction for the taxpayer (standard deduction vs itemized deduction).

☐ **STEP 7.** Address all red errors that have populated on the Federal return.
  - ***Note*****: Make sure to select "No Taxpayer ID"** on the Identity Verification Worksheet for taxpayer and spouse. We check this information during other parts of the process. Please do NOT enter this information into the client's return.
  - Refer to the *Mini Manual: Form 8867* for help filling out the Paid Preparer's Due Diligence Checklist.

☐ **STEP 8.** Switch over from the Federal to State (Illinois) return by clicking the "ST" button on the top toolbar. Correct any errors that appear.
  - ➢ IL Property Tax Credit - You will have to enter the Property Identification Number (PIN) of the client's house on Schedule ICR. The PIN is found on the property tax bill or by visiting the County Assessor's website and entering the client's address.
  - ➢ IL Use Tax – Refer to the Supplemental Intake Form or ask the client if they bought anything for use in Illinois on which they did not pay Illinois sales tax. Enter the total amount of untaxed purchases.
  - ➢ K-12 Education Expense Credit – Enter qualified expenses on Schedule ICR.

☐ **STEP 9.** Complete the Tax Preparer section of the ProSeries Client Data Sheet, including the name of the file, your computer number, and your name. The ProSeries file name will default to the first four letters of the taxpayer's last name and the last four digits of their Social Security number/ITIN.

☐ **STEP 10.** Save the client's file a final time, by going to *File > Save Client* one last time. Check to see that it is saved in the designated site folder on the **Z:** drive, **inside the tax site folde**r and **outside of the date folder**.

☐ **STEP 11.** Close out of the client's file by going to the top left-hand corner and clicking *File > Close Client*. The file you just completed preparing cannot be quality reviewed if it is still open on your computer.

☐ **STEP 12.** Give the client a BLUE index card to reserve a place in line for the quality review process and have the client return to the waiting area. **DO NOT SHARE THE REFUND OR AMOUNT OWED WITH THE CLIENT**. The Quality Reviewer must first review all the information in the return before sharing this information.

STUCK? ***Detailed step-by-step instructions for ALL of these steps and forms are available in the ProSeries Tax Manual.***
This and other tools can be found in the Resource folder on your laptop's desktop or printed at the tax site.