



## File your expat taxes without lifting a finger!

We've researched the very best specialist Expat US Tax preparers based on their experience, prices and importantly, customer feedback!

You can approach any of these expat tax specialists with complete peace of mind.

1.	Expat Tax Online	Customer Rating: 4.1 stars	Price - from \$298
2.	Taxes for Expats	Customer Rating: 3.9 stars	Price - from \$350
3.	Greenback Tax	Customer Rating: 3.9 stars	Price - from \$485
4.	Bright!Tax	Customer Rating: 3.1 stars	Price - from \$379

## How did we qualify the different companies?



**Pricing** - prices had to be clearly set out on the web-site, including any

conditions and extra prices for additional services. Our researchers had to be able to clearly work out the price for a standard federal return including options for a state return, FBAR FinCen 114 and FATCA Form 8938.



**Blog** - blogs are important, even if you don't read them. The frequen-

cy and freshness of articles tell us a great deal about a business and how proactive they are when it comes to helping clients and prospects learn about expat taxes. All our top 4 companies have recent blogs and newsletters that are actively discussing issues relating to US expatriates dealing with a huge array of issues. It's comforting to see websites that are continually updated, it's generally a sign of a good business that cares about customers and cares about how they are perceived.



**Price Conditions** - only Expat Tax Online and Taxes for Expats seem

to have conditions around the prices they offer in terms of income. Expat Tax Online have two low-price packages and both of them exclude expats with income over \$125,000, if you're in that income range you'll have to use their top tier package which is \$774, whilst it includes many services you may be paying for services you don't actually need. Taxes for Expats are a little simpler, you have to add \$100 to the fees if your Gross Income is over \$100,000.



**Contactable** - although not reported in the graphic, we made sure all

the companies were easily contactable via a phone number or LiveChat, we discarded businesses that wouldn't disclose a contact phone number or a way to speak with a real tax preparer from their business.



**Referral Bonus** - whilst it isn't necessary to offer a referral bonus,

we wanted expats to be able to consider it as part of the final cost. Not all bonuses are created equal, the referral bonus from Expat Tax Online and Taxes for Expats is actually a voucher for use against future services whilst the \$25 from Greenback Tax Services is an Amazon voucher which you can spend on whatever you want.



**Reviews** - this was very important! We all want to hear real reviews from

real customers before we choose where we buy from. Only Expat Tax Online and Taxes for Expats use externally managed reviews services from Feefo and TrustPilot, the others manage their own reviews which gives the company complete control over what reviews they publish and which ones end up in the bin.



**Social Media** - all top 4 expat tax specialists have Social Media pages that

are contactable. Again this shows a business that is happy to converse with clients and prospects, one that has the door open for positive and negative reviews.



**Security** - we dug as much as we could to learn about how each business

protects your data and keeps private information confidential. Expat Tax Online seem to go to great lengths and use some pretty tough security products such as Tresorit which is one of the safest storage facilities available, their whole site is secure and it's the only firm that offer protection at that level. Taxes for Expats, Greenback Tax and Bright!Tax all offer a Secure Portal for safe uploading and downloading of files. Expatriate Tax Returns does use a secure client login but we couldn't find much information on their site about how your information is handled.



# EXPAT TAX.ONLINE

# 4.1/5

<http://www.expattax.online>

A relatively new player in the expat tax preparation space, or so we first thought. After some digging we found out that Expat Tax Online is the online arm of the premier Dubai-based Expat US Tax, an alternative to the "Big 4" firms with offices in the United Arab Emirates, the States and Australia with around 50 or so staff. Tax preparation seems to take place within the company and not outsourced.

### **Price: 5**

Being a new brand for the business might have something to do with the frankly amazing prices for those that require basic returns. Only their top tier package is expensive but it still packs a lot of value if you need everything that comes in it.

### **Referral Bonus: 4**

It's nice but it can only be used against future tax services purchased from them, although you can share it with a friend and keep it for future tax preparation

### **Reviews: 3.5**

We always prefer to see externally managed reviews sites and Expat Tax Online uses Feefo, which is a leader in the review space. There are only a small number of reviews which we put down to being a new brand in this space. It's not a bad thing, it's just a lower score because of the small volume of results.

### **Blog: 3.5**

Good articles that cover the basics and a few videos too. They might good, but there aren't many, more articles would of have rendered a higher score here.

### **Contactable: 5**

We love real phone numbers and Live Chat and they are both clear and available on the website.

### **Social Media: 3**

Facebook and Twitter seem to be the two social channels of choice for Expat Tax Online, both featured fresh information during our research with a good mix of offers, help guides in both text and video format. The score is lower than expected because as a new player in the field they don't have many followers but that aside, they have a positive social presence.

### **Security: 5**

It's clear to see security is very important to these guys, they have taken the trouble to clearly explain exactly how your information is securely handled and it's published on their website. The use of leading products such as CCH by Wolters Kluwer and Tresorit are very reassuring. Emails that contain sensitive information and sent securely by Sendit Certified.



**TAXES FOR EXPATS**

<http://www.taxesforexpats.com>

**3.9/5**

Dedicated to expat US tax for almost 25 years, Taxes for Expats certainly have much experience under their belt. President and founder Ines (Ij) Zemelman MBA, EA has over 25 years' experience in international tax preparation and according to their website, a solid team that backs her up. Tax preparation seems to take place within the company and not outsourced.

**Price: 3.5**

Given the amount of experience in the team the price really isn't too bad, they are cheaper than other specialist preparers in our top 4 but if you earn over \$100,000 a year a simple federal return and state return will cost more than double the fees of Expat Tax Online.

**Referral Bonus: 4.5**

A generous \$75 referral bonus that can be used towards future services.

**Reviews: 5**

Taxes for Expats certainly have the strongest review campaign. Over 400 gleaming reviews on TrustPilot says it all really. If reviews matter to you then these are the guys for you!

**Blog: 3**

Fresh articles for sure but they aren't written or produced by Taxes for Expats, just copied from other sources. We don't have a problem with relevant stories being shared on a blog but it would be far more valuable if a specialist from the firm had a point-of-view on the article to help readers further. A couple of articles written by TFX would be nice too.

**Contactable: 4**

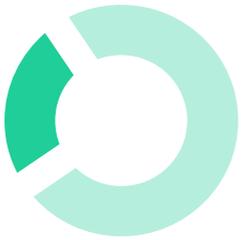
Phone numbers for the US and UK are easily found on the website which makes it easier to call them. Live Chat would be nice to see here.

**Social Media: 3**

Their Facebook page has over 3,600 likes which I know the pessimistic don't take too seriously, most of us know they can be bought cheaply but when you consider the 400+ TrustPilot reviews, it looks honest to us. Looking beyond that the response time on Facebook is very good and lots of fresh content, although again it isn't their own content, it is mostly links that go back to their blog which is simply articles from other publishers and same goes for Twitter.

**Security: 4**

There is a page on the website that talks about security of personal data but it doesn't go into much detail. Payments are processed by a secure third-party which is always good to see, it would be better if the email form on the contact page was secure and encrypted. TFX use an online tax data organizer and questionnaire which is secured by Comodo, an industry leading Secure Socket Layer provider (SSL).



**Greenback**  
Expatriate Tax Services™

[www.greenbacktaxservices.com](http://www.greenbacktaxservices.com)

**3.9/5**

Founded in 2008 by Carrie and David McKeegan, Greenback Tax Services have become very well-known and David is regularly quoted in press articles in relation to expatriate tax issues. The website is excellent and contains a great deal of information, written in basic terms that is easy for non-tax guru to follow. According to their website they look like a big firm with lots of accountants but on closer review many of the listed accountants seem to work for themselves and receive outsourced tax returns via Greenback. It certainly doesn't seem like an issue, there are many glowing reports out for there in favor of Greenback Tax Services but it might become difficult if there is ever a problem, who is ultimately responsible?

**Price: 2.5**

The most expensive of our top 4, again more than double Expat Tax Online if you need a Federal and State tax return to be prepared for you. It must be said, that's only true if your total income is under \$125,000 and Greenback don't have any income conditions that change the price.

**Referral Bonus: 4.5**

Our favorite referral bonus because you can spend an Amazon voucher on lots of stuff, it might be less than the others but in real terms, most people would prefer a \$25 Amazon voucher over a \$75 credit towards future tax work.

**Reviews: 3.5**

There are hundreds of glowing reviews for Greenback Tax Service, the reason for the lower score here is because they are self-managed. Not to say for one moment that they aren't real but it's easy for webmasters to pick and choose which reviews they publish. They all could be real, and every review might be published, but how do we know? From reviews elsewhere on the web, they certainly seem to be real to us and we've have no reason to doubt any of them.

**Blog: 5**

Our favorite blog by far! The Greenback website has it all, in both text form and video to really help any expat understand what they have to do. Frequent, fresh and easy to consume! The blog, webinars and newsroom really are a masterclass in how all blogs should be, both in terms of volume, readability and media formats.

**Contactable: 4**

A US phone number is very visible; Live Chat would be nice too.

**Social Media: 4**

Lots of followers on Facebook and Twitter and very nice posts too in terms of quality and images. Good reviews and comments are aplenty.

**Security: 4**

Files are transferred via a secure Box account which is secure and safe, so all good on that front. They also state that they use 256-bit security which could be relating the Box secure storage. It would be nice if the email form on the contact page was secure too, protecting people who might type in more than they probably should on an email contact form.



[www.brighttax.com](http://www.brighttax.com)

3.1/5

Founded by Gregory Dewald in 2010 by capital investment, Bright!Tax, based in New York call themselves a cloud-based US expat tax preparation firm focusing on just American expats and Green Card holders, like our other top 4 in the list. We aren't sure how genuine their reviews are...

#### **Price: 3**

The second most expensive of our top 4, again not far from double Expat Tax Online if you need a Federal and State tax return to be prepared for you, again that price comparison is for expats with income under \$125,000. They are also the most expensive preparers of State tax returns too, at \$159. There doesn't seem to be any restrictions on their prices and they are clearly laid on the site, which is good to see!

#### **Referral Bonus: 0**

We couldn't find anything on the Bright!Tax website that talks about a referral bonus at the time of writing.

#### **Reviews: 3**

Similar to Greenback in the sense that Bright!Tax have over 300 hundred reviews which are self-managed, almost all of them show 5-stars, there is only one on their Facebook page, again 5-stars. It's not to say for one moment that any of them are false, but in my experience even the very best companies have the odd hiccup and upset someone, and really it's about how you deal with mistakes rather than not making any

#### **Blog: 4**

A good blog, with plenty of easily-digestible content, nicely organized with both video, images and text. It's not in the same league as Greenback Tax but it is still pretty good and the basics are covered. It would be nice to see more video and be able to comment on the different articles, also some social sharing buttons would be good.

#### **Contactable: 4**

A US phone number is very visible; Live Chat as addition would be nice, also the contact page would be better if it were secure.

#### **Social Media: 4**

Bright!Tax is contactable via Facebook and the Twitter links go directly to CEO Gregory Dewald's account so it shouldn't be too hard getting hold of the boss if you need to. The posts on both Facebook and Twitter seem to be quite similar and drive traffic back to their own blog posts, certainly nothing wrong with that!

#### **Security: 4**

We aren't told on the Bright!Tax website much detail about how their security infrastructure protects your data but it says they certainly do, so that's something. At least if it is on there, the business owners know it is important and they certainly seem to take it seriously.



# EXPAT TAX ONLINE

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