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Publication 551 (12/2018), Basis of Assets

Revised: December 2018

Publication 551 - Introductory Material

Future Developments


For the latest information about developments related to Pub. 551, such as legislation enacted after this publication was published, go to [IRS.gov/Pub551](https://www.irs.gov/pub551).

What's New

Uniform capitalization rules. Beginning in 2018, small businesses are not subject to the uniform capitalization rules if the average annual gross receipts are \$25 million or less for the 3 preceding tax years and the business isn't a tax shelter. See *Uniform Capitalization Rules*, later.

Like-kind exchanges. Beginning after December 31, 2017, section 1031 like-kind exchange treatment applies only to exchanges of real property held for use in a trade or business or for investment, other than real property held primarily for sale. Certain exchanges of personal or intangible property started in 2017 and completed in 2018 may qualify as a like-kind exchange. See *Like-Kind Exchanges*, later.

Reminder

Photographs of missing children. The Internal Revenue Service is a proud partner with the [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® \(NCMEC\)](https://www.nccmec.org/) . Photographs of missing children selected by the Center may appear in this publication on pages that would otherwise be blank. You can help bring these children home by looking at the photographs and calling 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) if you recognize a child.

- **Real Property**
 - **Real estate taxes.**
 - **Settlement costs.**
 - **Points.**
 - **Points on home mortgage.**
 - **Assumption of mortgage.**
 - **Constructing assets.**
 - **Business Assets**
 - **Uniform Capitalization Rules**
 - **Activities subject to the rules.**
 - **More information.**
 - **Exceptions.**
 - **Intangible Assets**
 - **Patents.**
 - **Copyrights.**
 - **Franchises, trademarks, and trade names.**
 - **Allocating the Basis**
 - **Group of Assets Acquired**
 - **Trade or**
- Introduction**
- Basis is the amount of your investment in property for tax purposes. Use the basis of property to figure depreciation, amortization, depletion, and casualty losses. Also use it to figure gain or loss on the sale or other disposition of property. You must keep accurate records of all items that affect the basis of property so you can make these computations.
- This publication is divided into the following sections.
- Cost Basis
 - Adjusted Basis
 - Basis Other Than Cost
- The basis of property you buy is usually its cost. You may also have to capitalize (add to basis) certain other costs related to buying or producing the property.
- Your original basis in property is adjusted (increased or decreased) by certain events. If you make improvements to the property, increase your basis. If you take deductions for depreciation or casualty losses, reduce your basis.
- You can't determine your basis in some assets by cost. This includes property you receive as a gift or inheritance. It also applies to property received in an involuntary conversion and certain other circumstances.
- Comments and suggestions.** We welcome your comments about this publication and your suggestions for future editions.
- You can send us comments through [IRS.gov/FormComments](https://www.irs.gov/FormComments). Or you can write to:
- Internal Revenue Service
 Tax Forms and Publications
 1111 Constitution Ave. NW, IR-6526
 Washington, DC 20224
- Although we can't respond individually to each comment received, we do appreciate your feedback and will consider your comments as we revise our tax forms, instructions, and publications.
- Ordering forms and publications.** Visit [IRS.gov/FormsPubs](https://www.irs.gov/FormsPubs) to download forms and publications. Otherwise, you can go to [IRS.gov/OrderForms](https://www.irs.gov/OrderForms) to order current and prior-year forms and instructions. Your order should arrive within 10 business days.
- Tax questions.** If you have a tax question not answered by this publication, check [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) and [How To Get Tax Help](#) at the end of this publication.

Business

Acquired

Useful Items - You may want to see:

- Agreement.
 - Reporting requirement.
 - More information.
 - Land and Buildings
 - Demolition of building.
 - Modification of building.
 - Subdivided lots.
 - Future Form (and Instructions) improvement costs.
 - Use of erroneous cost basis.
- Publication**
- 463 Travel, Gift, and Car Expenses
 - 523 Selling Your Home
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- Form (and Instructions)**
- 706 United States Estate (and Generation-Skipping Transfer) Tax Return
 - 706-A United States Additional Estate Tax Return
 - 8594 Asset Acquisition Statement
- See *How To Get Tax Help* near the end of this publication for information about getting publications and forms.

Publication 551 - Main Content

Adjusted Basis

- Increases to Basis

- Assessments for Local Improvements
- Deducting vs. Capitalizing Costs

Cost Basis

The basis of property you buy is usually its cost. The cost is the amount you pay in cash, debt obligations, other property, or services. Your cost also includes amounts you pay for the following items.

- Table 1. Examples of Increases and Decreases to Basis
 - Sales tax.
 - Freight.
 - Installation and testing.
 - Excise taxes.
 - Legal and accounting fees (when they must be capitalized).
 - Revenue stamps.
 - Recording fees.
 - Real estate taxes (if assumed for the seller).

You may also have to capitalize (add to basis) certain other costs related to buying or producing property.

- **Decreases to Basis**
 - **Casualties and Thefts** **Loans with low or no interest.** If you buy property on a time-payment plan that charges little or no interest, the basis of your property is your stated purchase price, minus the amount considered to be unstated interest. You generally have unstated interest if your interest rate is less than the applicable federal rate. For more information, see *Unstated Interest and Original Issue Discount* in Pub. 537.
 - **Easements** **Purchase of a business.** When you purchase a trade or business, you generally purchase all assets used in the business operations, such as land, buildings, and machinery. Allocate the price among the various assets, including any section 197 intangibles. See *Allocating the Basis*, later.
 - **Vehicle Credits**
 - **Gas-Guzzler Tax**
 - **Section 179 Deduction** **Stocks and Bonds**
 - **Exclusion of Subsidies for Energy Conservation Measures** The basis of stocks or bonds you buy is generally the purchase price plus any costs of purchase, such as commissions and recording or transfer fees. If you get stocks or bonds other than by purchase, your basis is usually determined by the fair market value (FMV) or the previous owner's adjusted basis of the stock. You must adjust the basis of stocks for certain events that occur after purchase. See *Stocks and Bonds* in chapter 4 of Pub. 550 for more information on the basis of stock.
 - **Depreciation** **Identifying stock or bonds sold.** If you can adequately identify the shares of stock or the bonds you sold, their basis is the cost or other basis of the particular shares of stock or bonds. If you buy and sell securities at various times in varying quantities and you can't adequately identify the shares you sell, the basis of the securities you sell is the basis of the securities you acquired first. For more information about identifying securities you sell, see *Stocks and Bonds* under *Basis of Investment Property* in chapter 4 of Pub. 550.
 - **Canceled Debt Excluded From Income** **Mutual fund shares.** If you sell mutual fund shares acquired at different times and prices, you can choose to use an average basis. For more information, see Pub. 550.
 - **Postponed Gain From Sale of Home**
 - **Adoption Tax Benefits** **Real Property**
 - **Employer-Provided Child Care** Real property, also called real estate, is land and generally anything built on or attached to it. If you buy real property, certain fees and other expenses become part of your cost basis in the property.
 - **Disposition of a Portion of MACRS Property** **Real estate taxes.** If you pay real estate taxes the seller owed on real property you bought, and the seller didn't reimburse you, treat those taxes as part of your basis. You can't deduct them as taxes. If you reimburse the seller for taxes the seller paid for you, you can usually deduct that amount as an expense in the year of purchase. don't include that amount in the basis of the property. If you didn't reimburse the seller, you must reduce your basis by the amount of those taxes.
- **Adjustments to Basis**

Examples

- -
 -
 - **Basis Other Than Cost**
 - **Fair market value (FMV).**
 - **Property Received for Services**
 - **Bargain Purchases**
 - **Restricted Property**
 - **Fair market value.** Settlement costs don't include amounts placed in escrow for the future payment of items such as taxes and insurance. The following items are some settlement fees and closing costs you can't include in the basis of the property.
 1. Casualty insurance premiums.
 2. Rent for occupancy of the property before closing.
 3. Charges for utilities or other services related to occupancy of the property before closing.
 4. Charges connected with getting a loan. The following are examples of these charges.
 - a. Points (discount points, loan origination fees).
 - b. Mortgage insurance premiums.
 - c. Loan assumption fees.
 - d. Cost of a credit report.
 - e. Fees for an appraisal required by a lender.
 5. Fees for refinancing a mortgage.
- **Taxable Exchanges**
 - **Involuntary Conversions**
 - **Similar or related property.** If these costs relate to business property, items (1) through (3) are deductible as business expenses. Items (4) and (5) must be capitalized as costs of getting a loan and can be deducted over the period of the loan.
 - **Money or property not similar or related.**
 - **Allocating the basis.** **Points.** If you pay points to obtain a loan (including a mortgage, second mortgage, line of credit, or a home equity loan), don't add the points to the basis of the related property. Generally, you deduct the points over the term of the loan. For more information on how to deduct points, see *Points* in chapter 4 of Pub. 535.
 - **More information.**
- **Nontaxable Exchanges**
 - **Like-Kind Exchanges**
 - **Points on home mortgage.** Special rules may apply to points you and the seller pay when you obtain a mortgage to purchase your main home. If certain requirements are met, you can deduct the points in full for the year in which

- **Exchanges** they're paid. Reduce the basis of your home by any seller-paid points. For more information, see *Points* in Pub. 936, Home Mortgage Interest Deduction.
- **Property plus cash.** **Assumption of mortgage.** If you buy property and assume (or buy subject to) an existing mortgage on the property, your basis includes the amount you pay for the property plus the amount to be paid on the mortgage.
- **Special rules for related persons.** **Example.** If you buy a building for \$20,000 cash and assume a mortgage of \$80,000 on it, your basis is \$100,000.
- **Related persons.** **Constructing assets.** If you build property or have assets built for you, your expenses for this construction are part of your basis. Some of these expenses include the following costs.
 - **Partially Nontaxable Exchange Allocation of basis.**
 - Land.
 - Labor and materials.
 - Architect's fees.
 - Building permit charges.
 - Payments to contractors.
 - Payments for rental equipment.
 - Inspection fees.

In addition, if you own a business and use your employees, material, and equipment to build an asset, don't deduct the following expenses. You must include them in the asset's basis.

 - **Sale and Purchase of Business Property.**
 - Employee wages paid for the construction work, reduced by any employment credits allowed.
 - Depreciation on equipment you own while it's used in the construction.
 - Operating and maintenance costs for equipment used in the construction.
 - The cost of business supplies and materials used in the construction.

Don't include the value of your own labor, or any other labor you didn't pay for, in the basis of any property you construct.
- **Property Transferred From a Spouse**
- **Property Received as a Gift**
 - **FMV Less Than Donor's Adjusted Basis** **Business Assets**

If you purchase property to use in your business, your basis is usually its actual cost to you. If you construct, create, or otherwise produce property, you must capitalize the costs as your basis. In certain circumstances, you may be subject to the uniform capitalization rules (discussed next).
 - **FMV Equal to or More Than Donor's** **Uniform Capitalization Rules**

The uniform capitalization rules specify the costs you add to basis in certain circumstances.

- Adjusted Basis** **Activities subject to the rules.** You must use the uniform capitalization rules if you do any of the following in your trade or business or activity carried on for profit. However, see *Exceptions* below.

 - **Gift received before 1977.**
 - Produce real or tangible personal property for use in the business or activity.
 - **Gift received after 1976.**
 - Produce real or tangible personal property for sale to customers.
 - Acquire property for resale.
- **Inherited Property** You produce property if you construct, build, install, manufacture, develop, improve, create, raise, or grow the property. Treat property produced for you under a contract as produced by you up to the amount you pay or costs you otherwise incur for the property. Tangible personal property includes films, sound recordings, video tapes, books, or similar property. Under the uniform capitalization rules, you must capitalize all direct costs and an allocable part of most indirect costs you incur due to your production or resale activities. To capitalize means to include certain expenses in the basis of property you produce or in your inventory costs rather than deduct them as a current expense. You recover these costs through deductions for depreciation, amortization, or cost of goods sold when you use, sell, or otherwise dispose of the property. Any cost you can't use to figure your taxable income for any tax year isn't subject to the uniform capitalization rules.
 - **Appreciated property.**
 - **Community Property**
 - **Property Held by Surviving Tenant**
 - **Qualified Joint Interest**
 - **Basis.** **Example.** If you incur a business meal expense for which your deduction would be limited to 50% of the cost of the meal, that amount is subject to the uniform capitalization rules. The nondeductible part of the cost isn't subject to the uniform capitalization rules.
 - **Farm or Closely Held Business**
 - **More information.** For more information about these rules, see the regulations under section 263A of the Internal Revenue Code and Pub. 538, Accounting Periods and Methods.
 - **Special-use valuation.** **Exceptions.** Beginning in 2018, you're not subject to the uniform capitalization rules if your average annual gross receipts are \$25 million or less for the 3 preceding tax years and you're not a tax shelter. See section 263A(i). In addition, the following are not subject to the uniform capitalization rules.
 - Property you produce that you don't use in your trade, business, or activity conducted for profit.
 - Qualified creative expenses you pay or incur as a freelance (self-employed) writer, photographer, or artist that are otherwise deductible on your tax return.
 - Property you produce under a long-term contract, except for certain home construction contracts.
 - Research and experimental expenses deductible under section 174 of the Internal Revenue Code.
 - Before 2018, costs for personal property acquired for resale if your (or your predecessor's) average annual gross receipts for the 3 previous tax years don't exceed \$10 million.
- **Property Changed to Business or Rental Use**
 - **Basis for depreciation.**
 - **Sale of property.**
 - **Gain.**
 - **Loss.**

- [How To Get Tax Help](#)
 - [Tax reform.](#)
 - [Preparing and filing your tax return.](#)
 - [Getting tax forms and publications.](#)
 - [Access your online account \(individual taxpayers only\).](#)
 - [Using direct deposit.](#)
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 - [Checking on the status of](#)

For other exceptions to the uniform capitalization rules, see section 1.263A-1(b) of the regulations. For information on the special rules that apply to costs incurred in the business of farming, see chapter 6 in Pub. 225, *Farmer's Tax Guide*.

Intangible Assets

Intangible assets include goodwill, patents, copyrights, trademarks, trade names, and franchises. The basis of an intangible asset is usually the cost to buy or create it. If you acquire multiple assets, for example, an ongoing business for a lump sum, see *Allocating the Basis*, later, to figure the basis of the individual assets. The basis of certain intangibles can be amortized. See chapter 8 of Pub. 535 for information on the amortization of these costs.

Patents. The basis of a patent you get for an invention is the cost of development, such as research and experimental expenditures, drawings, working models, and attorneys' and governmental fees. If you deduct the research and experimental expenditures as current business expenses, you can't include them in the basis of the patent. The value of the inventor's time spent on an invention isn't part of the basis.

Copyrights. If you're an author, the basis of a copyright will usually be the cost of getting the copyright plus copyright fees, attorneys' fees, clerical assistance, and the cost of plates that remain in your possession. Don't include the value of your time as the author, or any other person's time you didn't pay for.

Franchises, trademarks, and trade names. If you buy a franchise, trademark, or trade name, the basis is its cost, unless you can deduct your payments as a business expense.

Allocating the Basis

If you buy multiple assets for a lump sum, allocate the amount you pay among the assets you receive. You must make this allocation to figure your basis for depreciation and gain or loss on a later disposition of any of these assets. See *Trade or Business Acquired* below.

Group of Assets Acquired

If you buy multiple assets for a lump sum, you and the seller may agree to a specific allocation of the purchase price among the assets in the sales contract. If this allocation is based on the value of each asset and you and the seller have adverse tax interests, the allocation generally will be accepted. However, see *Trade or Business Acquired* next.

- [your refund.](#)
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Trade or Business Acquired

If you acquire a trade or business, allocate the consideration paid to the various assets acquired. Generally, reduce the consideration paid by any cash and general deposit accounts (including checking and savings accounts) received. Allocate the remaining consideration to the other business assets received in proportion to (but not more than) their fair market value (FMV) in the following order.

1. Certificates of deposit, U.S. government securities, foreign currency, and actively traded personal property, including stock and securities.
2. Accounts receivable, other debt instruments, and assets you mark to market at least annually for federal income tax purposes.
3. Property of a kind that would properly be included in inventory if on hand at the end of the tax year or property held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business.
4. All other assets except section 197 intangibles, goodwill, and going concern value.
5. Section 197 intangibles except goodwill and going concern value.
6. Goodwill and going concern value (whether or not they qualify as section 197 intangibles).

Agreement. The buyer and seller may enter into a written agreement as to the allocation of any consideration or the FMV of any of the assets. This agreement is binding on both parties unless the IRS determines the amounts are not appropriate.

Reporting requirement. Both the buyer and seller involved in the sale of business assets must report to the IRS the allocation of the sales price among section 197 intangibles and the other business assets. Use Form 8594 to provide this information. The buyer and seller should each attach Form 8594 to their federal income tax return for the year in which the sale occurred.

More information. See *Sale of a Business* in chapter 2 of Pub. 544 for more information.

Land and Buildings

If you buy buildings and the land on which they stand for a lump sum, allocate the basis of the property among the land and the buildings so you can figure the depreciation allowable on the buildings.

Figure the basis of each asset by multiplying the lump sum by a fraction. The numerator is the FMV of that asset and the denominator is the FMV of the whole property at the time of purchase. If you're not certain of the FMV of the land and buildings, you can allocate the basis based on their assessed values for real estate tax purposes.

- For You?
- How Can You Reach TAS?
- How Else Does TAS Help

Taxpayers? If the building is a certified historic structure, the modification must also be part of a certified rehabilitation.

- Low Income Taxpayer Clinics (LITCs)

Demolition of building. Add demolition costs and other losses incurred for the demolition of any building to the basis of the land on which the demolished building was located. Don't claim the costs as a current deduction.

Modification of building. A modification of a building won't be treated as a demolition if both the following conditions are satisfied.

- 75% or more of the existing external walls of the building are retained in place as internal or external walls.
- 75% or more of the existing internal structural framework of the building is retained in place.

If these conditions are met, add the costs of the modifications to the basis of the building.

Subdivided lots. If you buy a tract of land and subdivide it, you must determine the basis of each lot. This is necessary because you must figure the gain or loss on the sale of each individual lot. As a result, you don't recover your entire cost in the tract until you have sold all of the lots. To determine the basis of an individual lot, multiply the total cost of the tract by a fraction. The numerator is the FMV of the lot and the denominator is the FMV of the entire tract.

Future improvement costs. If you're a developer and sell subdivided lots before the development work is completed, you can (with IRS consent) include in the basis of the properties sold an allocation of the estimated future cost for common improvements. See Revenue Procedure 92-29, 1992-1 C.B. 748, for more information, including an explanation of the procedures for getting consent from the IRS.

Use of erroneous cost basis. If you made a mistake in figuring the cost basis of subdivided lots sold in previous years, you can't correct the mistake for years for which the statute of limitations (generally, 3 tax years) has expired. Figure the basis of any remaining lots by allocating the correct original cost basis of the entire tract among the original lots.

Example. You bought a tract of land to which you assigned a cost of \$15,000. You subdivided the land into 15 building lots of equal size and equitably divided your basis so that each lot had a basis of \$1,000. You treated the sale of each lot as a separate transaction and figured gain or loss separately on each sale. Several years later, you determine that your original basis in the tract was \$22,500 and not \$15,000. You sold eight lots using \$8,000 of basis in years for which the statute of limitations has expired. You now can take \$1,500 of basis into account for figuring gain or loss only on the sale of each of the remaining seven lots (\$22,500 basis divided among all 15 lots). You can't refigure the basis of the eight lots sold in tax years barred by the statute of limitations.

- Publication 551 - Additional Material

Adjusted Basis

Before figuring gain or loss on a sale, exchange, or other disposition of property, or figuring allowable depreciation, depletion or amortization, you must usually make certain adjustments to the basis of the property. The result of these adjustments to the basis is the adjusted basis.

Increases to Basis

Increase the basis of any property by all items properly added to a capital account. These include the cost of any improvements having a useful life of more than 1 year.

Rehabilitation expenses also increase basis. However, you must subtract any rehabilitation credit allowed for these expenses before you add them to your basis. If you have to recapture any of the credit, increase your basis by the recaptured amount.

If you make additions or improvements to business property, keep separate accounts for them. Also, you must depreciate the basis of each according to the depreciation rules that would apply to the underlying property if you had placed it in service at the same time you placed the addition or improvement in service. For more information, see Pub. 946.

The following items increase the basis of property.

- The cost of extending utility service lines to the property.
- Impact fees.
- Legal fees, such as the cost of defending and perfecting title.
- Legal fees for obtaining a decrease in an assessment levied against property to pay for local improvements.
- Zoning costs.
- The capitalized value of a redeemable ground rent.

Assessments for Local Improvements

Increase the basis of property by assessments for items such as paving roads and building ditches that increase the value of the property assessed. Don't deduct them as taxes. However, you can deduct as taxes charges for maintenance, repairs, or interest charges related to the improvements.

Example. Your city changes the street in front of your store into an enclosed pedestrian mall and assesses you and other affected landowners for the cost of the conversion. Add the assessment to your property's basis. In this example, the assessment is a depreciable asset.

Deducting vs. Capitalizing Costs

Don't add to your basis costs you can deduct as current expenses. For example, amounts paid for incidental repairs or maintenance that are deductible as business expenses can't be added to basis. However, you can choose either to deduct or to capitalize certain other costs. If you capitalize these costs, include them in your basis. If you deduct them, don't include them in your basis. See [Uniform Capitalization Rules](#), earlier.

The costs you can choose to deduct or to capitalize include the following.

- Carrying charges, such as interest and taxes, that you pay to own property, except carrying charges that must be capitalized under the uniform capitalization rules.
- Research and experimentation costs.
- Intangible drilling and development costs for oil, gas, and geothermal wells.
- Exploration costs for new mineral deposits.
- Mining development costs for a new mineral deposit.
- Costs of establishing, maintaining, or increasing the circulation of a newspaper or other periodical.
- Costs of removing architectural and transportation barriers to people with disabilities and the elderly. If you claim the disabled access credit, you must reduce the amount you deduct or capitalize by the amount of the credit.

For more information about deducting or capitalizing costs, see chapter 7 in Pub. 535.

Table 1. Examples of Increases and Decreases to Basis

<u>Increases to Basis</u>	<u>Decreases to Basis</u>
Capital improvements: Putting an addition on your home Replacing an entire roof Paving your driveway Installing central air conditioning Rewiring your home	Exclusion from income of subsidies for energy conservation measures Casualty or theft loss deductions and insurance reimbursements Certain vehicle credits

Assessments for local improvements: Water connections Sidewalks Roads	Section 179 deduction
Casualty losses: Restoring damaged property	Depreciation
Legal fees: Cost of defending and perfecting a title Zoning costs	Nontaxable corporate distributions

Decreases to Basis

The following are some items that reduce the basis of property.

- Section 179 deduction.
- Nontaxable corporate distributions.
- Deductions previously allowed (or allowable) for amortization, depreciation, and depletion.
- Exclusion of subsidies for energy conservation measures.
- Certain vehicle credits.
- Residential energy credits.
- Postponed gain from sale of home.
- Investment credit (part or all) taken.
- Casualty and theft losses and insurance reimbursement.
- Certain canceled debt excluded from income.
- Rebates treated as adjustments to the sales price.
- Easements.
- Gas-guzzler tax.
- Adoption tax benefits.
- Credit for employer-provided child care.
- Partial disposition of MACRS property, whether you elect to recognize the partial disposition or are required to recognize it.

Some of these items are discussed next.

Casualties and Thefts

If you have a casualty or theft loss, decrease the basis in your property by any insurance or other reimbursement and by any deductible loss not covered by insurance.

If you dispose of a portion of MACRS property because of a loss sustained from a casualty event, decrease the basis in the property by any insurance or other reimbursement and by any deductible loss on the disposed portion of the property that isn't covered by insurance. The deductible loss is generally the decrease in the fair market value of the property resulting from the casualty event, but is limited to the adjusted basis of the disposed portion of the MACRS property.

You must increase your basis in the property by the amount you spend on repairs that substantially prolong the life of the property, increase its value, or adapt it to a different use. To make this determination, compare the repaired property to the property before the casualty. If the amount you spent didn't otherwise improve the property, then it's deductible as a repair and doesn't affect basis. For more information on casualty and theft losses, see Pub. 547.

Easements

The amount you receive for granting an easement is generally considered to be a sale of an interest in real property. It reduces the basis of the affected part of the property. If the amount received is more than the basis of the part of the property affected by the easement, reduce your basis in that part to zero and treat the excess as a recognized gain.

Vehicle Credits

Unless you elect not to claim the qualified vehicle credit, the alternative motor vehicle credit, or the qualified plug-in electric drive motor vehicle credit, you may have to reduce the basis of each qualified vehicle by certain amounts reported. For more information on available credits, see Form 8834, Qualified Electric Vehicle Credit; Form 8910, Alternative Motor Vehicle Credit; Form 8936, Qualified Plug-in Electric Drive Motor Vehicle Credit; and the related instructions.

Gas-Guzzler Tax

Decrease the basis in your car by the gas-guzzler (fuel economy) tax if you begin using the car within 1 year of the date of its first sale for ultimate use. This rule also applies to someone who later buys the car and begins using it not more than 1 year after the original sale for ultimate use. If the car is imported, the 1-year period begins on the date of entry or withdrawal of the car from the warehouse if that date is later than the date of the first sale for ultimate use.

Section 179 Deduction

If you take the section 179 deduction for all or part of the cost of qualifying business property, decrease the basis of the property by the deduction. For more information about the section 179 deduction, see Pub. 946.

Exclusion of Subsidies for Energy Conservation Measures

You can exclude from gross income any subsidy you received from a public utility company for the purchase or installation of any energy conservation measure for a dwelling unit. Reduce the basis of the property for which you received the subsidy by the excluded amount. For more information on this subsidy, see Pub. 525.

Depreciation

Decrease the basis of property by the depreciation you deducted, or could have deducted, on your tax returns under the method of depreciation you chose. If you took less depreciation than you could have under the method chosen, decrease the basis by the amount you could have taken under that method. If you didn't take a depreciation deduction, reduce the basis by the full amount of the depreciation you could have taken.

Unless a timely election is made not to deduct the special depreciation allowance for property placed in service after September 10, 2001, decrease the property's basis by the special depreciation allowance you deducted or could have deducted.

If you deducted more depreciation than you should have, decrease your basis by the amount equal to the depreciation you should have deducted plus the part of the excess depreciation you deducted that actually reduced your tax liability for the year.

In decreasing your basis for depreciation, take into account the amount deducted on your tax returns as depreciation and any depreciation capitalized under the uniform capitalization rules.

For information on figuring depreciation, see Pub. 946.

If you're claiming depreciation on a business vehicle, see Pub. 463. If the car isn't used more than 50% for business during the tax year, you may have to recapture excess depreciation. Include the excess depreciation in your gross income and add it to your basis in the property. For information on the computation of excess depreciation, see chapter 4 in Pub. 463.

Canceled Debt Excluded From Income

If a debt you owe is canceled or forgiven, other than as a gift or bequest, you generally must include the canceled amount in your gross income for tax purposes. A debt includes any indebtedness for which you're liable or which attaches to property you hold.

You can exclude canceled debt from income in the following situations.

1. Debt canceled in a bankruptcy case or when you're insolvent.
2. Qualified farm debt.
3. Qualified real property business debt (provided you're not a C corporation).

If you exclude from income canceled debt under situation (1) or (2), you may have to reduce the basis of your depreciable and nondepreciable property. However, in situation (3), you must reduce the basis of your depreciable property by the excluded amount.

For more information about canceled debt in a bankruptcy case or during insolvency, see Pub. 908, Bankruptcy Tax Guide. For more information about canceled debt that is qualified farm debt, see chapter 3 in Pub. 225. For more information about qualified real property business debt, see chapter 5 in Pub. 334, Tax Guide for Small Business.

Postponed Gain From Sale of Home

If you postponed gain from the sale of your main home before May 7, 1997, you must reduce the basis of your new home by the postponed gain. For more information on the rules for the sale of a home, see Pub. 523.

Adoption Tax Benefits

If you claim an adoption credit for the cost of improvements you added to the basis of your home, decrease the basis of your home by the credit allowed. This also applies to amounts you received under an employer's adoption assistance program and excluded from income. For more information, see Form 8839, Qualified Adoption Expenses.

Employer-Provided Child Care

If you're an employer, you can claim the employer-provided child care credit on amounts you paid or incurred to acquire, construct, rehabilitate, or expand property used as part of your qualified child care facility. You must reduce your basis in that property by the credit claimed. For more information, see Form 8882, Credit for Employer-Provided Child Care Facilities and Services.

Disposition of a Portion of MACRS Property

If you sell a portion of MACRS property (a MACRS asset), you must reduce the adjusted basis of the asset by the adjusted basis of the portion sold. Use your records to determine which portion of the asset was sold, the date the asset was placed in service, the unadjusted basis of the portion sold, and its adjusted basis. See the partial disposition rules in Regulations section 1.168(i)-8 for more detail. The adjusted basis of the portion sold is used to determine the gain or loss realized on the sale. Also see Pub. 544.

If you physically abandon a portion of MACRS property (a MACRS asset) and you elect to recognize the loss on the abandonment by reporting the loss on your tax return, you must reduce the adjusted basis of the MACRS asset by the adjusted basis of the portion abandoned. Use your records to determine which portion of the asset was abandoned, the date the asset was placed in service, the unadjusted basis of the portion abandoned, and its adjusted basis. See the partial disposition rules in Regulations section 1.168(i)-8 for more detail. Also see *Example 2* and *Example 3* below.

Adjustments to Basis Examples

Example 1. In January 2013, you paid \$80,000 for real property to be used as a factory. You also paid commissions of \$2,000 and title search and legal fees of \$600. You allocated the total cost of \$82,600 between the land and the building —\$10,325 for the land and \$72,275 for the building. Immediately, you spent \$20,000 in remodeling the building before you placed it in service. You were allowed depreciation of \$14,526 for the years 2013 through 2017. In 2016, you had a \$5,000 casualty loss from a storm that wasn't covered by insurance on the building. You claimed a deduction for this loss. You spent \$5,500 to repair the damages and to otherwise improve the building. The adjusted basis of the building on January 1, 2018, is figured as follows:

Original cost of building including fees and commissions	\$72,275
Adjustments to basis:	
Add:	
Improvements	20,000
Repair of damages	5,500
	\$97,775
Subtract:	
Depreciation	\$14,526
Deducted casualty loss	5,000
	19,526
Adjusted basis on January 1, 2018	\$78,249

The basis of the land, \$10,325, remains unchanged. It's not affected by any of the above adjustments.

Example 2. You own a building that you purchased in 1990 for \$75,000. You use the building in your business. The building is a MACRS asset. You removed and abandoned the roof on the building and replaced it with a new roof. You make

the partial disposition election to recognize loss on the abandonment of the old roof by reporting the loss on your timely filed tax return. The loss is the adjusted basis of the roof as of the first day of the tax year of the abandonment. Using your records, you determine that the abandoned roof was placed in service in 1990 with the building, the unadjusted basis of the building attributable to the roof is \$5,000, and after you deducted depreciation of \$3,500 on the roof, its adjusted basis as of the first day of the tax year of the abandonment is \$1,500. Report the \$1,500 ordinary loss in Part II of Form 4797. In your depreciation records, you must reduce the unadjusted basis of the building, \$75,000, by the unadjusted basis of the roof, \$5,000, as well as reduce the accumulated depreciation of the building by the accumulated depreciation on the roof, \$3,500. You must also capitalize the cost of the replacement roof and depreciate it as a separate asset from the building.

Example 3. You own a bulldozer that you purchased 2 years ago for \$25,000. You use the bulldozer in your business. The bulldozer is a MACRS asset. You removed and replaced the bucket on the bulldozer with a new bucket. You make the partial disposition election to recognize loss on the abandonment of the old bucket by reporting the loss on your timely filed tax return. The loss is the adjusted basis of the bucket as of the first day of the tax year of the abandonment. Using your records, you determine that the abandoned bucket was placed in service with the bulldozer, the unadjusted basis of the bucket is \$5,000, and after you deducted depreciation of \$3,800 on the bucket, the adjusted basis of the bucket as of the first day of the tax year of the abandonment is \$1,200. Report the \$1,200 ordinary loss in Part II of Form 4797. In your depreciation records, you must reduce the unadjusted basis of the bulldozer, \$25,000, by the unadjusted basis of the bucket, \$5,000, as well as reduce the accumulated depreciation of the bulldozer by the accumulated depreciation on the bucket, \$3,800. You must also capitalize the cost of the replacement bucket and begin depreciating it as a separate asset from the bulldozer.

Basis Other Than Cost

There are many times when you can't use cost as basis. In these cases, the fair market value or the adjusted basis of property may be used. Adjusted basis is discussed earlier.

Fair market value (FMV). FMV is the price at which property would change hands between a buyer and a seller, neither having to buy or sell, and both having reasonable knowledge of all necessary facts. Sales of similar property on or about the same date may be helpful in figuring the property's FMV.

Property Received for Services

If you receive property for services, include the property's FMV in income. The amount you include in income becomes your basis. If the services were performed for a price agreed on beforehand, it will be accepted as the FMV of the property if there is no evidence to the contrary.

Bargain Purchases

A bargain purchase is a purchase of an item for less than its FMV. If, as compensation for services, you purchase goods or other property at less than FMV, include the difference between the purchase price and the property's FMV in your income. Your basis in the property is its FMV (your purchase price plus the amount you include in income).

If the difference between your purchase price and the FMV represents a qualified employee discount, don't include the difference in income. However, your basis in the property is still its FMV. See *Employee Discounts* in Pub. 15-B.

Restricted Property

If you receive property for your services and the property is subject to certain restrictions, your basis in the property is its FMV when it becomes substantially vested unless you make the election discussed later. Property becomes substantially vested when your rights in the property or the rights of any person to whom you transfer the property are not subject to a substantial risk of forfeiture.

There is substantial risk of forfeiture when the rights to full enjoyment of the property depend on the future performance of substantial services by any person.

When the property becomes substantially vested, include the FMV, less any amount you paid for the property, in income.

Example. Your employer gives you stock for services performed under the condition that you'll have to return the stock unless you complete 5 years of service. The stock is under a substantial risk of forfeiture and isn't substantially vested when you receive it. You don't report any income until you have completed the 5 years of service that satisfy the condition.

Fair market value. Figure the FMV of property you received without considering any restriction except one that by its terms will never end.

Example. You received stock from your employer for services you performed. If you want to sell the stock while you're still employed, you must sell the stock to your employer at book value. At your retirement or death, you or your estate must offer to sell the stock to your employer at its book value. This is a restriction that by its terms will never end and you must consider it when you figure the FMV.

Election. You can choose to include in your gross income the FMV of the property at the time of transfer, less any amount you paid for it. If you make this choice, the substantially vested rules don't apply. Your basis is the amount you paid plus the amount you included in income.

See the discussion of *Restricted Property* in Pub. 525 for more information.

Taxable Exchanges

A taxable exchange is one in which the gain is taxable or the loss is deductible. A taxable gain or deductible loss is also known as a recognized gain or loss. If you receive property in exchange for other property in a taxable exchange, the basis of property you receive is usually its FMV at the time of the exchange. A taxable exchange occurs when you receive cash or property not similar or related in use to the property exchanged.

Example. You trade a tract of farm land with an adjusted basis of \$3,000 for a tractor that has an FMV of \$6,000. You must report a taxable gain of \$3,000 for the land. The tractor has a basis of \$6,000.

Involuntary Conversions

If you receive property as a result of an involuntary conversion, such as a casualty, theft, or condemnation, you can figure the basis of the replacement property you receive using the basis of the converted property.

Similar or related property. If you receive replacement property similar or related in service or use to the converted property, the replacement property's basis is the old property's basis on the date of the conversion. However, make the following adjustments.

1. Decrease the basis by the following.
 - a. Any loss you recognize on the conversion.
 - b. Any money you receive that you don't spend on similar property.
2. Increase the basis by the following.
 - a. Any gain you recognize on the conversion.
 - b. Any cost of acquiring the replacement property.

Money or property not similar or related. If you receive money or property not similar or related in service or use to the converted property, and you buy replacement property similar or related in service or use to the converted property, the basis of the new property is its cost decreased by the gain not recognized on the conversion.

Example. The state condemned your property. The property had an adjusted basis of \$26,000 and the state paid you \$31,000 for it. You realized a gain of \$5,000 (\$31,000 – \$26,000). You bought replacement property similar in use to the converted property for \$29,000. You recognize a gain of \$2,000 (\$31,000 – \$29,000), the unspent part of the payment from the state. Your gain not recognized is \$3,000, the difference between the \$5,000 realized gain and the \$2,000 recognized gain. The basis of the new property is figured as follows:

Cost of replacement property	\$29,000
Minus: Gain not recognized	3,000
Basis of the replacement property	\$26,000

Allocating the basis. If you buy more than one piece of replacement property, allocate your basis among the properties based on their respective costs.

Example. The state in the previous example condemned your unimproved real property and the replacement property you bought was improved real property with both land and buildings. Allocate the replacement property's \$26,000 basis between land and buildings based on their respective costs.

More information. For more information about condemnations, see *Involuntary Conversions* in Pub. 544. For more information about casualty and theft losses, see Pub. 547.

Nontaxable Exchanges

A nontaxable exchange is an exchange in which you're not taxed on any gain and you can't deduct any loss. If you receive property in a nontaxable exchange, its basis is usually the same as the basis of the property you transferred. A nontaxable gain or loss is also known as an unrecognized gain or loss.

Like-Kind Exchanges

The exchange of property for the same kind of property may qualify as a nontaxable exchange under section 1031 of the Internal Revenue Code. Beginning after 2017, nontaxable like-kind exchange treatment under section 1031 applies only to exchanges of real property held for use in a trade or business or for investment, other than real property held primarily for sale. Before 2017, section 1031 also applied to certain exchanges of personal or intangible property. Nontaxable like-kind exchange treatment under section 1031 will still apply to a qualifying exchange of personal or intangible property if the taxpayer disposed of the exchanged property on or before December 31, 2017, or received replacement property on or before that date.

To qualify as a like-kind exchange, you must hold for business or investment purposes both the real property you transfer and the real property you receive. There must also be an exchange of like-kind property. For more information, see *Like-Kind Exchanges* in Pub. 544.

The basis of the property you receive is the same as the basis of the property you gave up.

Example. You exchange real estate (adjusted basis \$50,000, FMV \$80,000) held for investment for other real estate (FMV \$80,000) held for investment. Your basis in the new property is the same as the basis of the old property (\$50,000).

Exchange expenses. Exchange expenses are generally the closing costs you pay. They include such items as brokerage commissions, attorney fees, deed preparation fees, etc. Add them to the basis of the like-kind property received.

Property plus cash. If you trade property in a like-kind exchange and also pay money, the basis of the property received is the basis of the property you gave up increased by the money you paid.

Example. You exchange a parcel of real property (adjusted basis of \$30,000) for another parcel of real property (FMV \$75,000) and pay \$40,000. Your basis in the newly acquired real property is \$70,000 (the \$30,000 adjusted basis of the old parcel plus the \$40,000 paid).

Special rules for related persons. If a like-kind exchange takes place directly or indirectly between related persons and either party disposes of the property within 2 years after the exchange, the exchange no longer qualifies for like-kind exchange treatment. Each person must report any gain or loss not recognized on the original exchange. Each person reports it on the tax return filed for the year in which the later disposition occurs. If this rule applies, the basis of the property received in the original exchange will be its fair market value (at the time of the exchange).

These rules generally don't apply to the following kinds of property dispositions.

- Dispositions due to the death of either related person.
- Involuntary conversions.
- Dispositions in which neither the original exchange nor the subsequent disposition had as a main purpose the avoidance of federal income tax.

Related persons. Generally, related persons are ancestors, lineal descendants, brothers and sisters (whole or half), and a spouse.

For other related persons (for example, two corporations, an individual and a corporation, a grantor and fiduciary, etc.), see *Nondeductible Loss* in chapter 2 of Pub. 544.

Partially Nontaxable Exchange

A partially nontaxable exchange is an exchange in which you receive unlike property or money in addition to like property. The basis of the property you receive is the same as the basis of the property you gave up, with the following adjustments.

1. Decrease the basis by the following amounts.
 - a. Any money you receive.
 - b. Any loss you recognize on the exchange.
2. Increase the basis by the following amounts.
 - a. Any additional costs you incur.
 - b. Any gain you recognize on the exchange.

If the other party to the exchange assumes your liabilities, treat the debt assumption as money you received in the exchange.

Example. You trade a parcel of real property with an adjusted basis of \$60,000 for another parcel of real property with an FMV of \$52,000 and \$10,000 cash. You realize a gain of \$2,000 (the FMV of the parcel of real property received plus the cash minus the adjusted basis of real property you traded (\$52,000 + \$10,000 – \$60,000)). You must include all \$2,000 of the gain in income as recognized gain because the gain is less than the cash received. Your basis in the newly acquired parcel of real property is as follows:

Adjusted basis of old property	\$60,000
Minus: Cash received (adjustment 1(a))	10,000
	\$50,000
Plus: Gain recognized (adjustment 2(b))	2,000
Basis of new property	\$52,000

Allocation of basis. Allocate the basis first to the unlike property, other than money, up to its FMV on the date of the exchange. The rest is the basis of the like property.

Example. You had an adjusted basis of \$15,000 in real estate you held for investment. You exchanged it for other real estate to be held for investment with an FMV of \$12,500, a truck with an FMV of \$3,000, and \$1,000 cash. The truck is unlike property. You realized a gain of \$1,500 (\$16,500 – \$15,000). This is the FMV of the real estate received plus the FMV of the truck received plus the cash **minus** the adjusted basis of the real estate you traded (\$12,500 + \$3,000 + \$1,000 – \$15,000). You include in income (recognize) all \$1,500 of the gain because it's less than the FMV of the unlike property plus the cash received. Your basis in the properties you received is figured as follows:

Adjusted basis of real estate transferred	\$15,000
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Minus: Cash received (adjustment 1(a))	1,000
	\$14,000
Plus: Gain recognized (adjustment 2(b))	1,500
Total basis of properties received	\$15,500

Allocate the total basis of \$15,500 first to the unlike property — the truck (\$3,000). This is the truck's FMV. The rest (\$12,500) is the basis of the real estate.

Sale and Purchase

If you sell property and buy similar property in two mutually dependent transactions, you may have to treat the sale and purchase as a single nontaxable exchange.

Example. You have real property held for productive use in your trade or business. Its adjusted basis is \$500,000 and its fair market value is \$750,000. You're interested in replacing the property with real estate containing a building worth \$900,000. Ordinarily, you would swap properties and pay the \$150,000 difference in fair market values. Your basis would then be \$650,000 (\$150,000 cash paid plus \$500,000 adjusted basis in your old property). You want your new real property to have a larger basis for depreciation, so you arrange to sell your old property to the other party. You then buy the new property from that individual for \$900,000. However, if the sale and purchase are reciprocal and mutually dependent, you're treated as having exchanged your old property for the new property. In that case, your basis for depreciation for the new property is \$650,000, the same as if you had exchanged the old property for the new property.

Partial Business Use of Property

If you have real property, a portion of which is used for business and a portion of which is used for personal use, and you exchange it in a nontaxable exchange for real property to be used wholly or partly in your business, the basis of the property you receive is figured separately for the business and nonbusiness use parts. The part of the property used for business is an exchange of like-kind property. The personal-use part of the property is property on which gain is recognized.

Figure the adjusted basis of each part of the property by taking into account any adjustments to basis. Deduct the depreciation you took or could have taken from the adjusted basis of the business part. Then figure the amount realized for your property and allocate it to the business and nonbusiness parts of the property.

You're deemed to have received, in exchange for the nonbusiness part, an amount equal to its FMV on the date of the exchange. The basis of the property you acquired is the total basis of the property transferred (adjusted to the date of the exchange), increased by any gain recognized on the nonbusiness part.

If the nonbusiness part of the property transferred is your main home, you may qualify to exclude from income all or part of the gain on that part. For more information, see Pub. 523.

Property Transferred From a Spouse

The basis of property transferred to you or transferred in trust for your benefit by your spouse (or former spouse if the transfer is incident to divorce) is the same as your spouse's adjusted basis. However, adjust your basis for any gain recognized by your spouse or former spouse on property transferred in trust. This rule applies only to a transfer of property in trust in which the liabilities assumed, plus the liabilities to which the property is subject, are more than the adjusted basis of the property transferred.

If the property transferred to you is a series E, series EE, or series I U.S. savings bond, the transferor must include in income the interest accrued to the date of transfer. Your basis in the bond immediately after the transfer is equal to the transferor's basis increased by the interest income includible in the transferor's income. For more information on these bonds, see Pub. 550.

At the time of the transfer, the transferor must give you the records necessary to determine the adjusted basis and holding period of the property as of the date of transfer.

For more information, see Pub. 504, Divorced or Separated Individuals.

Property Received as a Gift

To figure the basis of property you receive as a gift, you must know its adjusted basis (defined earlier) to the donor just before it was given to you, its FMV at the time it was given to you, and any gift tax paid on it.

FMV Less Than Donor's Adjusted Basis

If the FMV of the property at the time of the gift is less than the donor's adjusted basis, your basis depends on whether you have a gain or a loss when you dispose of the property. Your basis for figuring gain is the same as the donor's adjusted basis plus or minus any required adjustment to basis while you held

the property. Your basis for figuring loss is its FMV when you received the gift plus or minus any required adjustment to basis while you held the property (see [Adjusted Basis](#), earlier).

If you use the donor's adjusted basis for figuring a gain and get a loss, and then use the FMV for figuring a loss and have a gain, you have neither gain nor loss on the sale or disposition of the property.

Example. You received an acre of land as a gift. At the time of the gift, the land had an FMV of \$8,000. The donor's adjusted basis was \$10,000. After you received the land, no events occurred to increase or decrease your basis. If you sell the land for \$12,000, you'll have a \$2,000 gain because you must use the donor's adjusted basis (\$10,000) at the time of the gift as your basis to figure gain. If you sell the land for \$7,000, you'll have a \$1,000 loss because you must use the FMV (\$8,000) at the time of the gift as your basis to figure a loss. If the sales price is between \$8,000 and \$10,000, you have neither gain nor loss. For instance, if the sales price was \$9,000 and you tried to figure a gain using the donor's adjusted basis (\$10,000), you would get a \$1,000 loss. If you then tried to figure a loss using the FMV (\$8,000), you would get a \$1,000 gain.

Business property. If you hold the gift as business property, your basis for figuring any depreciation, depletion, or amortization deduction is the same as the donor's adjusted basis plus or minus any required adjustments to basis while you hold the property.

FMV Equal to or More Than Donor's Adjusted Basis

If the FMV of the property is equal to or greater than the donor's adjusted basis, your basis is the donor's adjusted basis at the time you received the gift. Increase your basis by all or part of any gift tax paid, depending on the date of the gift.

Also, for figuring gain or loss from a sale or other disposition of the property, or for figuring depreciation, depletion, or amortization deductions on business property, you must increase or decrease your basis by any required adjustments to basis while you held the property. See [Adjusted Basis](#), earlier.

Gift received before 1977. If you received a gift before 1977, increase your basis in the gift (the donor's adjusted basis) by any gift tax paid on it. However, don't increase your basis above the FMV of the gift at the time it was given to you.

Example 1. You were given a house in 1976 with an FMV of \$21,000. The donor's adjusted basis was \$20,000. The donor paid a gift tax of \$500. Your basis is \$20,500, the donor's adjusted basis plus the gift tax paid.

Example 2. If, in [Example 1](#), the gift tax paid had been \$1,500, your basis would be \$21,000. This is the donor's adjusted basis plus the gift tax paid, limited to the FMV of the house at the time you received the gift.

Gift received after 1976. If you received a gift after 1976, increase your basis in the gift (the donor's adjusted basis) by the part of the gift tax paid on it that is due to the net increase in value of the gift. Figure the increase by multiplying the gift tax paid by a fraction. The numerator of the fraction is the net increase in value of the gift, and the denominator is the amount of the gift.

The net increase in value of the gift is the FMV of the gift less the donor's adjusted basis. The amount of the gift is its value for gift tax purposes after reduction by any annual exclusion and marital or charitable deduction that applies to the gift. For information on the gift tax, see Pub. 559, Survivors, Executors, and Administrators.

Example. In 2018, you received a gift of property from your mother that had an FMV of \$50,000. Her adjusted basis was \$20,000. The amount of the gift for gift tax purposes was \$35,000 (\$50,000 minus the \$15,000 annual exclusion). She paid a gift tax of \$7,100. Your basis, \$26,106, is figured as follows:

Fair market value	\$50,000
Minus: Adjusted basis	20,000
Net increase in value	\$30,000
Gift tax paid	\$7,100
Multiplied by ($\$30,000 \div \$35,000$)	0.86
Gift tax due to net increase in value	\$6,106
Adjusted basis of property to your mother	20,000
Your basis in the property	\$26,106

Inherited Property

The basis of property inherited from a decedent is generally one of the following.

1. The FMV of the property at the date of the individual's death.
2. The FMV on the alternate valuation date if the personal representative for the estate chooses to use alternate valuation. For information on the alternate valuation date, see the Instructions for Form 706.
3. The value under the special-use valuation method for real property used in farming or a closely held business if chosen for estate tax purposes. This method is discussed later.
4. The decedent's adjusted basis in land to the extent of the value excluded from the decedent's taxable estate as a qualified conservation easement. For information on a qualified conservation easement, see the Instructions for Form 706.

If a federal estate tax return doesn't have to be filed, your basis in the inherited property is its appraised value at the date of death for state inheritance or transmission taxes.

For more information, see the Instructions for Form 706.

Appreciated property. The above rule doesn't apply to appreciated property you receive from a decedent if you or your spouse originally gave the property to the decedent within 1 year before the decedent's death. Your basis in this property is the same as the decedent's adjusted basis in the property immediately before his or her death, rather than its FMV. Appreciated property is any property whose FMV on the day it was given to the decedent is more than its adjusted basis.

Community Property

In community property states (Arizona, California, Idaho, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin), married individuals are each usually considered to own half the community property. When either spouse dies, the total value of the community property, even the part belonging to the surviving spouse, generally becomes the basis of the entire property. For this rule to apply, at least half the value of the community property interest must be includible in the decedent's gross estate, whether or not the estate must file a return.

For example, you and your spouse owned community property that had a basis of \$80,000. When your spouse died, half the FMV of the community interest was includible in your spouse's estate. The FMV of the community interest was \$100,000. The basis of your half of the property after the death of your spouse is \$50,000 (half of the \$100,000 FMV). The basis of the other half to your spouse's heirs is also \$50,000.

For more information on community property, see Pub. 555, Community Property.

Property Held by Surviving Tenant

The following example explains the rule for the basis of property held by a surviving tenant in joint tenancy or tenancy by the entirety.

Example. John and Jim owned, as joint tenants with right of survivorship, business property they purchased for \$30,000. John furnished two-thirds of the purchase price and Jim furnished one-third. Depreciation deductions allowed before John's death were \$12,000. Under local law, each had a half interest in the income from the property. At the date of John's death, the property had an FMV of \$60,000, two-thirds of which is includible in John's estate. Jim figures his basis in the property at the date of John's death as follows:

Interest Jim bought with his own funds— $\frac{1}{3}$ of \$30,000 cost \$10,000

Interest Jim received on John's death— $\frac{2}{3}$ of \$60,000 FMV	40,000	\$50,000
Minus: $\frac{1}{2}$ of \$12,000 depreciation before John's death		6,000
Jim's basis at the date of John's death		\$44,000

If Jim hadn't contributed any part of the purchase price, his basis at the date of John's death would be \$54,000. This is figured by subtracting from the \$60,000 FMV, the \$6,000 depreciation allocated to Jim's half interest before the date of death. If under local law Jim had no interest in the income from the property and he contributed no part of the purchase price, his basis at John's death would be \$60,000, the FMV of the property.

Qualified Joint Interest

Include one-half of the value of a qualified joint interest in the decedent's gross estate. It doesn't matter how much each spouse contributed to the purchase price. Also, it doesn't matter which spouse dies first.

A qualified joint interest is any interest in property held by married individuals as either of the following.

- Tenants by the entirety.
- Joint tenants with right of survivorship if the married couple are the only joint tenants.

Basis. As the surviving spouse, your basis in property you owned with your spouse as a qualified joint interest is the cost of your half of the property with certain adjustments. Decrease the cost by any deductions allowed to you for depreciation and depletion. Increase the reduced cost by your basis in the half you inherited.

Farm or Closely Held Business

Under certain conditions, when a person dies the executor or personal representative of that person's estate can choose to value the qualified real property on other than its FMV. If so, the executor or personal representative values the qualified real property based on its use as a farm or its use in a closely held business. If the executor or personal representative chooses this method of valuation for estate tax purposes, that value is the basis of the property for the heirs. Qualified heirs should be able to get the necessary value from the executor or personal representative of the estate.

Special-use valuation. If you're a qualified heir who received special-use valuation property, your basis in the property is the estate's or trust's basis in that property immediately before the distribution. Increase your basis by any gain recognized by the estate or trust because of post-death appreciation. Post-

death appreciation is the property's FMV on the date of distribution minus the property's FMV either on the date of the individual's death or the alternate valuation date. Figure all FMVs without regard to the special-use valuation. You can elect to increase your basis in special-use valuation property if it becomes subject to the additional estate tax. This tax is assessed if, within 10 years after the death of the decedent, you transfer the property to a person who isn't a member of your family or the property stops being used as a farm or in a closely held business. To increase your basis in the property, you must make an irrevocable election and pay interest on the additional estate tax figured from the date 9 months after the decedent's death until the date of the payment of the additional estate tax. If you meet these requirements, increase your basis in the property to its FMV on the date of the decedent's death or the alternate valuation date. The increase in your basis is considered to have occurred immediately before the event that results in the additional estate tax. You make the election by filing with Form 706-A a statement that does all of the following.

- Contains your name, address, and taxpayer identification number and those of the estate.
- Identifies the election as an election under section 1016(c) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Specifies the property for which the election is made,
- Provides any additional information required by the Instructions for Form 706-A.

For more information, see the Instructions for Form 706 and the Instructions for Form 706-A.

Property Changed to Business or Rental Use

If you hold property for personal use and then change it to business use or use it to produce rent, you must figure its basis for depreciation. An example of changing property held for personal use to business use would be renting out your former main home.

Basis for depreciation. The basis for depreciation is the lesser of the following amounts.

- The FMV of the property on the date of the change, or
- Your adjusted basis on the date of the change.

Example. Several years ago, you paid \$160,000 to have your home built on a lot that cost \$25,000. You paid \$20,000 for permanent improvements to the house and claimed a \$2,000 casualty loss deduction for damage to the house before changing the property to rental use last year. Because land isn't depreciable, you include only the cost of the house when figuring the basis for depreciation. Your adjusted basis in the house when you changed its use was \$178,000 (\$160,000 + \$20,000 – \$2,000). On the same date, your property had an FMV of

\$180,000, of which \$15,000 was for the land and \$165,000 was for the house. The basis for figuring depreciation on the house is its FMV on the date of change (\$165,000) because it's less than your adjusted basis (\$178,000).

Sale of property. If you later sell or dispose of property changed to business or rental use, the basis of the property you use will depend on whether you're figuring gain or loss.

Gain. The basis for figuring a gain is your adjusted basis when you sell the property.

Example. Assume the same facts as in the previous example except that you sell the property at a gain after being allowed depreciation deductions of \$37,500. Your adjusted basis for figuring gain is \$165,500 ($\$178,000 + \$25,000$ (land) – \$37,500).

Loss. Figure the basis for a loss starting with the smaller of your adjusted basis or the FMV of the property at the time of the change to business or rental use. Then adjust this amount for the period after the change in the property's use, as discussed earlier under *Adjusted Basis*, to arrive at a basis for loss.

Example. Assume the same facts as in the previous example, except that you sell the property at a loss after being allowed depreciation deductions of \$37,500. In this case, you would start with the FMV on the date of the change to rental use (\$180,000) because it's less than the adjusted basis of \$203,000 ($\$178,000 + \$25,000$) on that date. Reduce that amount (\$180,000) by the depreciation deductions to arrive at a basis for loss of \$142,500 ($\$180,000 - \$37,500$).

How To Get Tax Help

If you have questions about a tax issue, need help preparing your tax return, or want to download free publications, forms, or instructions, go to [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) and find resources that can help you right away.

Tax reform. Major tax reform legislation impacting individuals, businesses, and tax-exempt entities was enacted by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act on December 22, 2017. Go to [IRS.gov/TaxReform](https://www.irs.gov/TaxReform) for information and updates on how this legislation affects your taxes.

Preparing and filing your tax return. Find free options to prepare and file your return on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) or in your local community if you qualify.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to people who generally make \$55,000 or less, persons with disabilities, and limited-English-speaking taxpayers who need help preparing their own tax returns. The Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program offers free tax help for all taxpayers, particularly those who are 60 years of age and older. TCE volunteers specialize in answering questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors.

You can go to [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) to see your options for preparing and filing your return which include the following.

- **Free File.** Go to [IRS.gov/FreeFile](https://www.irs.gov/FreeFile) to see if you qualify to use brand-name software to prepare and *e-file* your federal tax return for free.
- **VITA.** Go to [IRS.gov/VITA](https://www.irs.gov/VITA), download the free IRS2Go app, or call 800-906-9887 to find the nearest VITA location for free tax return preparation.
- **TCE.** Go to [IRS.gov/TCE](https://www.irs.gov/TCE), download the free IRS2Go app, or call 888-227-7669 to find the nearest TCE location for free tax return preparation.

Getting answers to your tax law questions. On [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov), get answers to your tax questions anytime, anywhere.

- Go to [IRS.gov/Help](https://www.irs.gov/Help) for a variety of tools that will help you get answers to some of the most common tax questions.
- Go to [IRS.gov/ITA](https://www.irs.gov/ITA) for the Interactive Tax Assistant, a tool that will ask you questions on a number of tax law topics and provide answers. You can print the entire interview and the final response for your records.
- Go to [IRS.gov/Pub17](https://www.irs.gov/Pub17) to get Pub. 17, Your Federal Income Tax for Individuals, which features details on tax-saving opportunities, 2018 tax changes, and thousands of interactive links to help you find answers to your questions. View it online in HTML, as a PDF, or download it to your mobile device as an eBook.
- You may also be able to access tax law information in your electronic filing software.

Getting tax forms and publications. Go to [IRS.gov/Forms](https://www.irs.gov/Forms) to view, download, or print all of the forms and publications you may need. You can also download and view popular tax publications and instructions (including the 1040 instructions) on mobile devices as an eBook at no charge. Or you can go to [IRS.gov/OrderForms](https://www.irs.gov/OrderForms) to place an order and have forms mailed to you within 10 business days.

Access your online account (individual taxpayers only). Go to [IRS.gov/Account](https://www.irs.gov/Account) to securely access information about your federal tax account.

- View the amount you owe, pay online, or set up an online payment agreement.
- Access your tax records online.
- Review the past 24 months of your payment history.
- Go to [IRS.gov/SecureAccess](https://www.irs.gov/SecureAccess) to review the required identity authentication process.

Using direct deposit. The fastest way to receive a tax refund is to combine direct deposit and IRS *e-file*. Direct deposit securely and electronically transfers your refund directly into your financial account. Eight in 10 taxpayers use direct deposit to receive their refund. The IRS issues more than 90% of refunds in less than 21 days.

Refund timing for returns claiming certain credits. The IRS can't issue refunds before mid-February 2019 for returns that claimed the earned income credit (EIC) or the additional child tax credit (ACTC). This applies to the entire refund, not just the portion associated with these credits.

Getting a transcript or copy of a return. The quickest way to get a copy of your tax transcript is to go to [IRS.gov/Transcripts](https://www.irs.gov/Transcripts). Click on either "Get Transcript Online" or "Get Transcript by Mail" to order a copy of your transcript. If you prefer, you can:

- Order your transcript by calling 800-908-9946, or
- Mail Form 4506-T or Form 4506T-EZ (both available on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov)).

Using online tools to help prepare your return. Go to [IRS.gov/Tools](https://www.irs.gov/Tools) for the following.

- The [Earned Income Tax Credit Assistant \(IRS.gov/EITCAssistant\)](https://www.irs.gov/EITCAssistant) determines if you're eligible for the EIC.
- The [Online EIN Application \(IRS.gov/EIN\)](https://www.irs.gov/EIN) helps you get an employer identification number.
- The [IRS Withholding Calculator \(IRS.gov/W4App\)](https://www.irs.gov/W4App) estimates the amount you should have withheld from your paycheck for federal income tax purposes and can help you perform a "paycheck checkup."
- The [First Time Homebuyer Credit Account Look-up \(IRS.gov/HomeBuyer\)](https://www.irs.gov/HomeBuyer) tool provides information on your repayments and account balance.
- The [Sales Tax Deduction Calculator \(IRS.gov/SalesTax\)](https://www.irs.gov/SalesTax) figures the amount you can claim if you itemize deductions on Schedule A (Form 1040), choose not to claim state and local income taxes, and you didn't save your receipts showing the sales tax you paid.

Resolving tax-related identity theft issues.

- The IRS doesn't initiate contact with taxpayers by email or telephone to request personal or financial information. This includes any type of electronic communication, such as text messages and social media channels.
- Go to [IRS.gov/IDProtection](https://www.irs.gov/IDProtection) for information.
- If your SSN has been lost or stolen or you suspect you're a victim of tax-related identity theft, visit [IRS.gov/IdentityTheft](https://www.irs.gov/IdentityTheft) to learn what steps you

should take.

Checking on the status of your refund.

- Go to [IRS.gov/Refunds](https://www.irs.gov/Refunds).
- The IRS can't issue refunds before mid-February 2019 for returns that claimed the EIC or the ACTC. This applies to the entire refund, not just the portion associated with these credits.
- Download the official IRS2Go app to your mobile device to check your refund status.
- Call the automated refund hotline at 800-829-1954.

Making a tax payment. The IRS uses the latest encryption technology to ensure your electronic payments are safe and secure. You can make electronic payments online, by phone, and from a mobile device using the IRS2Go app. Paying electronically is quick, easy, and faster than mailing in a check or money order. Go to [IRS.gov/Payments](https://www.irs.gov/Payments) to make a payment using any of the following options.

- **IRS Direct Pay:** Pay your individual tax bill or estimated tax payment directly from your checking or savings account at no cost to you.
- **Debit or credit card:** Choose an approved payment processor to pay online, by phone, and by mobile device.
- **Electronic Funds Withdrawal:** Offered only when filing your federal taxes using tax return preparation software or through a tax professional.
- **Electronic Federal Tax Payment System:** Best option for businesses. Enrollment is required.
- **Check or money order:** Mail your payment to the address listed on the notice or instructions.
- **Cash:** You may be able to pay your taxes with cash at a participating retail store.

What if I can't pay now? Go to [IRS.gov/Payments](https://www.irs.gov/Payments) for more information about your options.


- Apply for an [online payment agreement \(IRS.gov/OPA\)](https://www.irs.gov/OPA) to meet your tax obligation in monthly installments if you can't pay your taxes in full today. Once you complete the online process, you'll receive immediate notification of whether your agreement has been approved.
- Use the [Offer in Compromise Pre-Qualifier \(IRS.gov/OIC\)](https://www.irs.gov/OIC) to see if you can settle your tax debt for less than the full amount you owe.

Checking the status of an amended return. Go to [IRS.gov/WMAR](https://www.irs.gov/WMAR) to track the status of Form 1040X amended returns. Please note that it can take up to 3

weeks from the date you mailed your amended return for it to show up in our system and processing it can take up to 16 weeks.

Understanding an IRS notice or letter. Go to [IRS.gov/Notices](https://www.irs.gov/Notices) to find additional information about responding to an IRS notice or letter.

Contacting your local IRS office. Keep in mind, many questions can be answered on IRS.gov without visiting an IRS Tax Assistance Center (TAC). Go to [IRS.gov/LetUsHelp](https://www.irs.gov/LetUsHelp) for the topics people ask about most. If you still need help, IRS TACs provide tax help when a tax issue can't be handled online or by phone. All TACs now provide service by appointment so you'll know in advance that you can get the service you need without long wait times. Before you visit, go to [IRS.gov/TACLocator](https://www.irs.gov/TACLocator) to find the nearest TAC, check hours, available services, and appointment options. Or, on the IRS2Go app, under the Stay Connected tab, choose the Contact Us option and click on "Local Offices."

Watching IRS videos. The IRS Video portal ([IRSVideos.gov](https://www.irs.gov/IRSVideos) ) contains video and audio presentations for individuals, small businesses, and tax professionals.

Getting tax information in other languages. For taxpayers whose native language isn't English, we've the following resources available. Taxpayers can find information on IRS.gov in the following languages.

- [Spanish \(IRS.gov/Spanish\)](https://www.irs.gov/Spanish).
- [Chinese \(IRS.gov/Chinese\)](https://www.irs.gov/Chinese).
- [Vietnamese \(IRS.gov/Vietnamese\)](https://www.irs.gov/Vietnamese).
- [Korean \(IRS.gov/Korean\)](https://www.irs.gov/Korean).
- [Russian \(IRS.gov/Russian\)](https://www.irs.gov/Russian).

The IRS TACs provide over-the-phone interpreter service in over 170 languages, and the service is available free to taxpayers.

The Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS) Is Here To Help You

What is TAS?

TAS is an **independent** organization within the IRS that helps taxpayers and protects taxpayer rights. Their job is to ensure that every taxpayer is treated fairly and that you know and understand your rights under the [Taxpayer Bill of Rights](#).

How Can You Learn About Your Taxpayer Rights?

The Taxpayer Bill of Rights describes 10 basic rights that all taxpayers have when dealing with the IRS. Go to [TaxpayerAdvocate.IRS.gov/](https://www.irs.gov/advocate) to help you understand [what these rights mean to you](#) and how they apply. These are **your** rights. Know them. Use them.

What Can TAS Do For You?

TAS can help you resolve problems that you can't resolve with the IRS. And their service is free. If you qualify for their assistance, you'll be assigned to one advocate who will work with you throughout the process and will do everything possible to resolve your issue. TAS can help you if:



- Your problem is causing financial difficulty for you, your family, or your business;
- You face (or your business is facing) an immediate threat of adverse action; or
- You've tried repeatedly to contact the IRS but no one has responded, or the IRS hasn't responded by the date promised.

How Can You Reach TAS?

TAS has offices [in every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico](#). Your local advocate's number is in your local directory and at [TaxpayerAdvocate.IRS.gov/Contact-Us](https://www.irs.gov/advocate/contact-us). You can also call them at 877-777-4778.

How Else Does TAS Help Taxpayers?

TAS works to resolve large-scale problems that affect many taxpayers. If you know of one of these broad issues, please report it to them at [IRS.gov/SAMS](https://www.irs.gov/SAMS).

TAS also has a website, [Tax Reform Changes](https://www.taxchanges.us) , which shows you how the new tax law may change your future tax filings and helps you plan for these changes. The information is categorized by tax topic in the order of the IRS Form 1040. Go to [TaxChanges.us](https://www.taxchanges.us)  for more information.

Low Income Taxpayer Clinics (LITCs)

LITCs are independent from the IRS. LITCs represent individuals whose income is below a certain level and need to resolve tax problems with the IRS, such as audits, appeals, and tax collection disputes. In addition, clinics can provide information about taxpayer rights and responsibilities in different languages for individuals who speak English as a second language. Services are offered for

free or a small fee. To find a clinic near you, visit TaxpayerAdvocate.IRS.gov/LITCmap or see IRS Pub. 4134, [Low Income Taxpayer Clinic List](#) [PDF](#).

Publication 551 - Additional Material

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