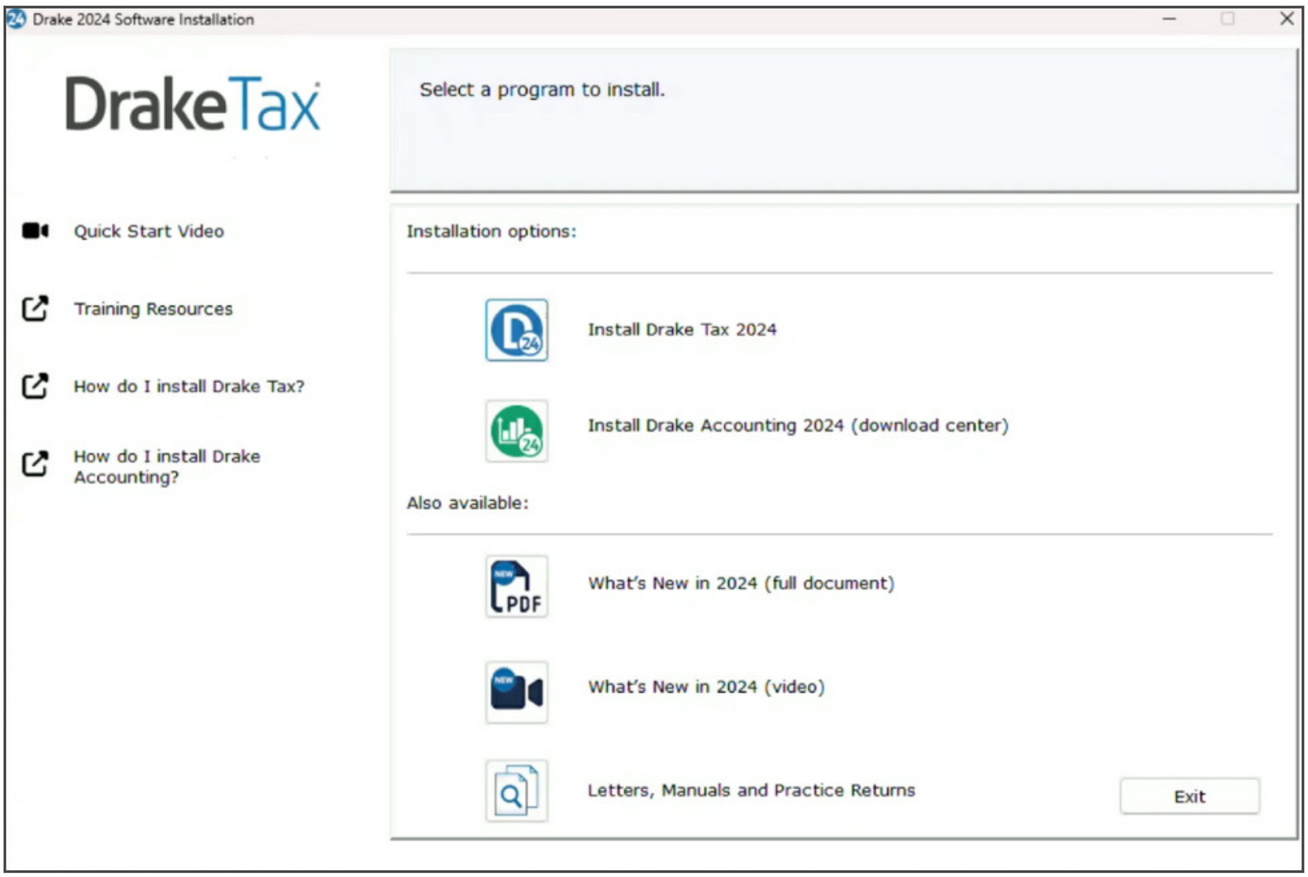
QUICK START

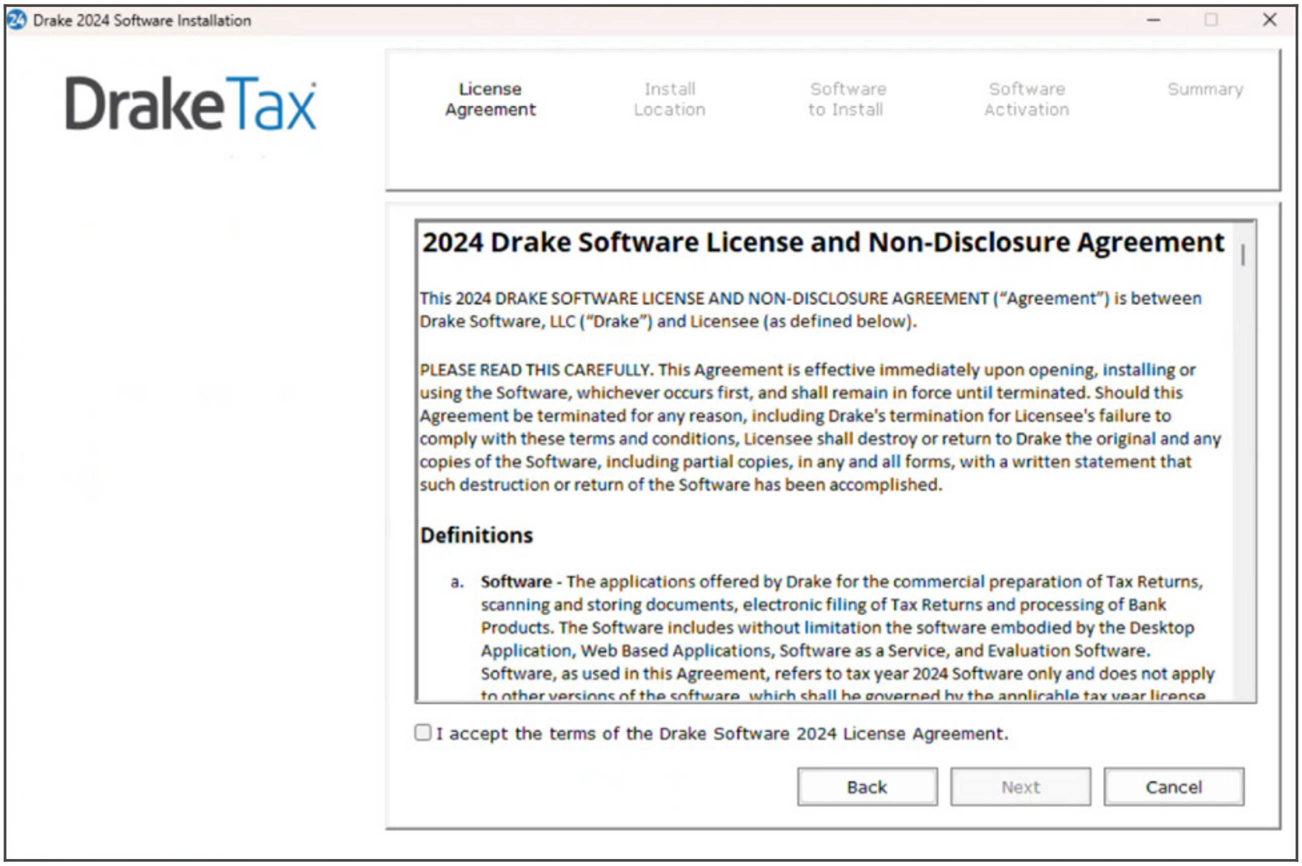
INSTALLATION

Install Drake Tax® from the email link or the Drake Software Support site (Support.DrakeSoftware.com **> Downloads > Drake Tax**).

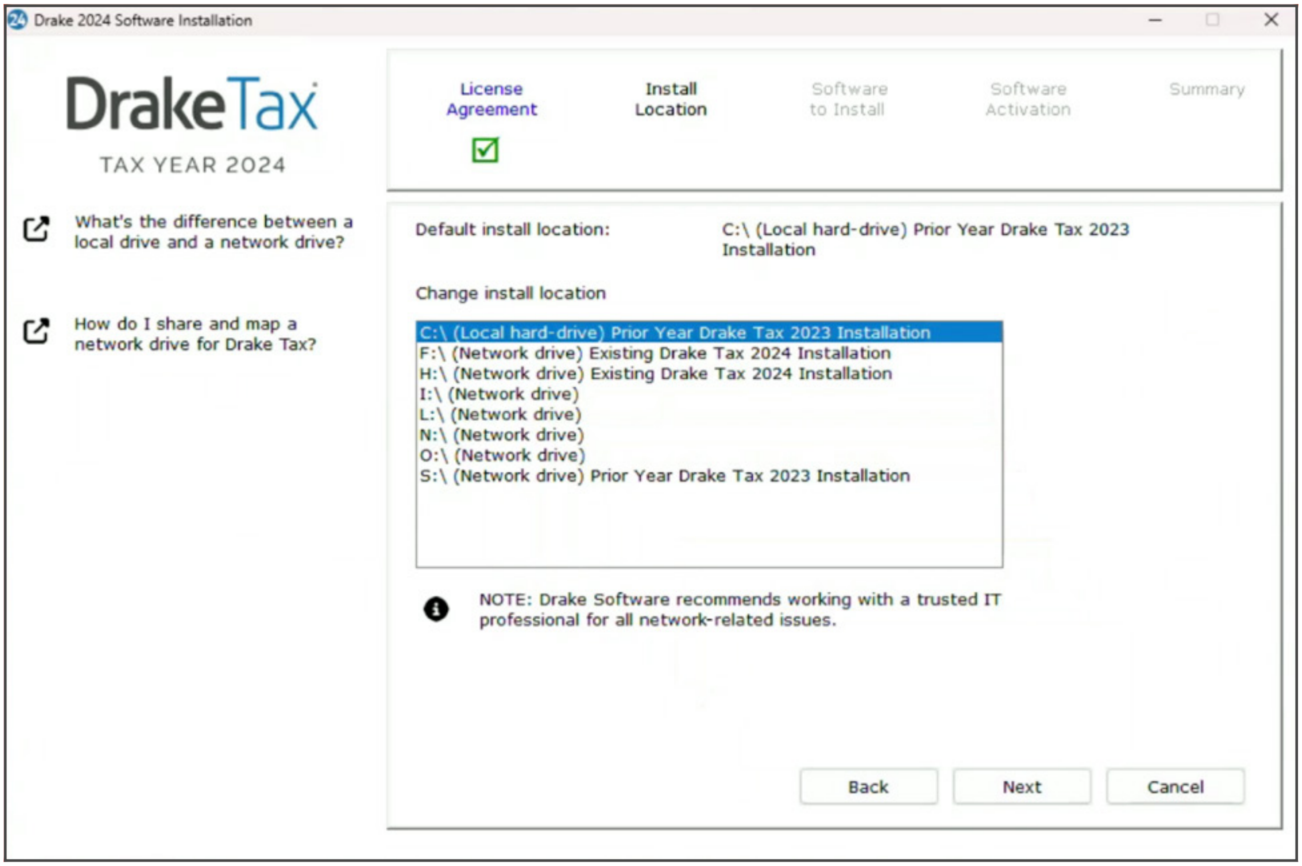
On the **Software Installation** screen, click **Install Drake Tax 2024** to begin the installation process.



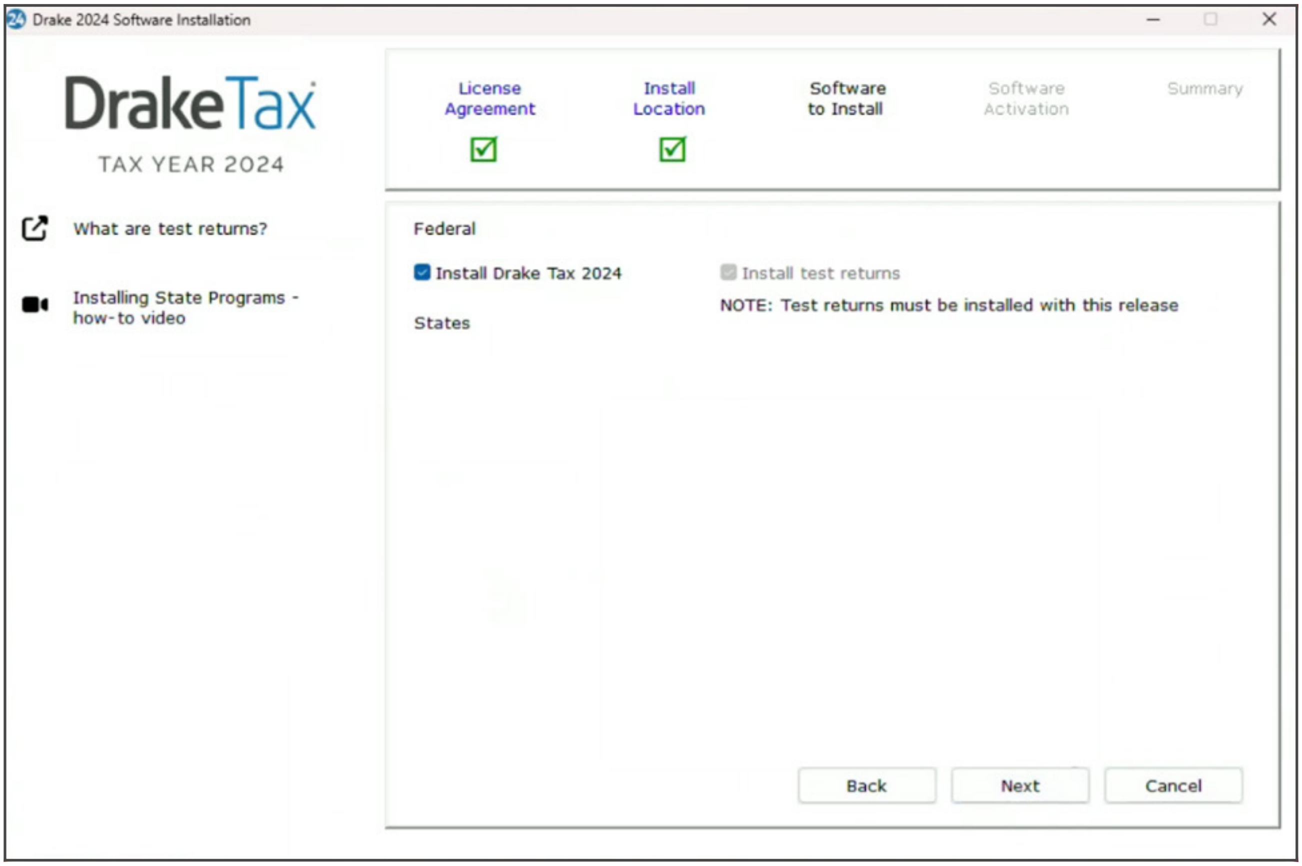
Read and accept the Drake Software 2024 License Agreement. Click **Next** to continue.



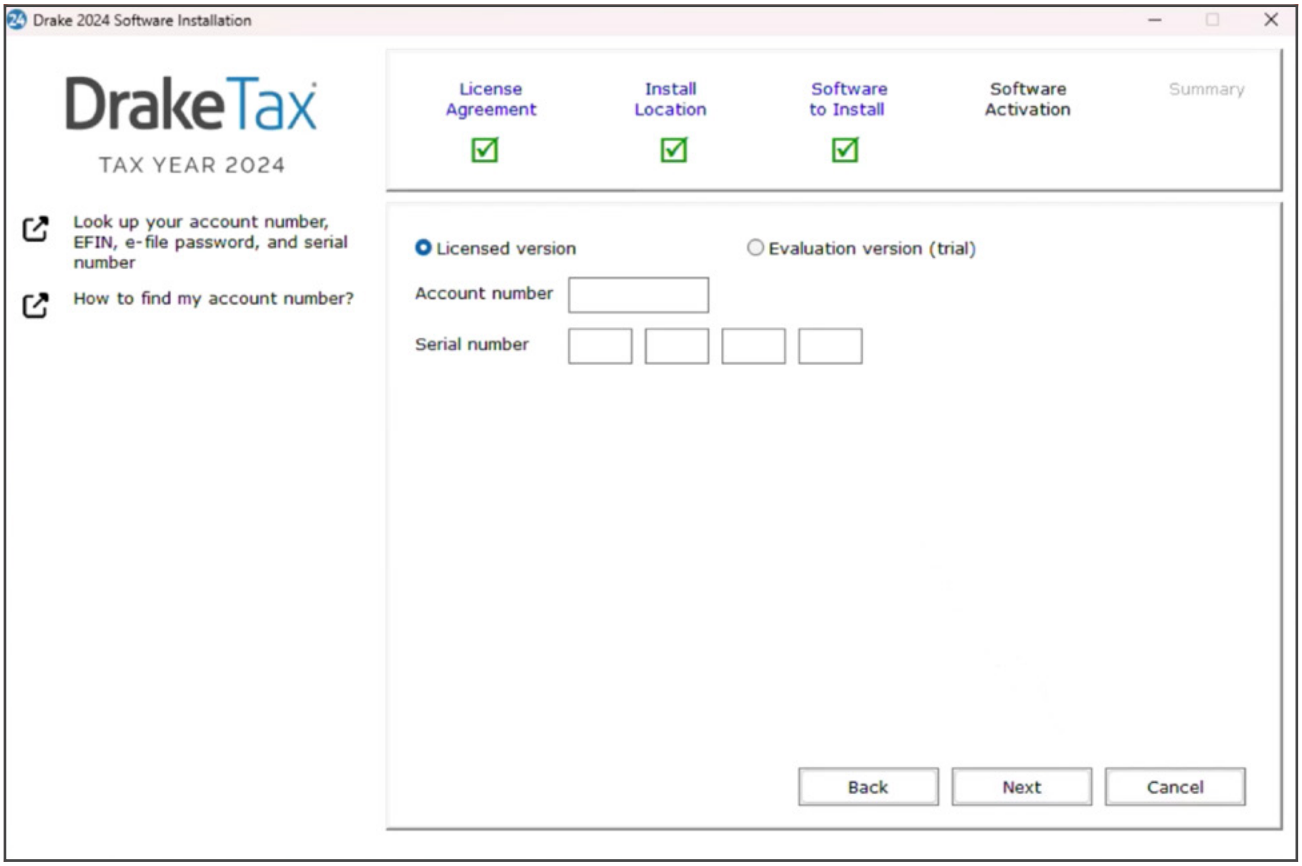
Choose an installation location. If using a network drive, we recommend working with an IT professional for setup. Click **Next** to continue.



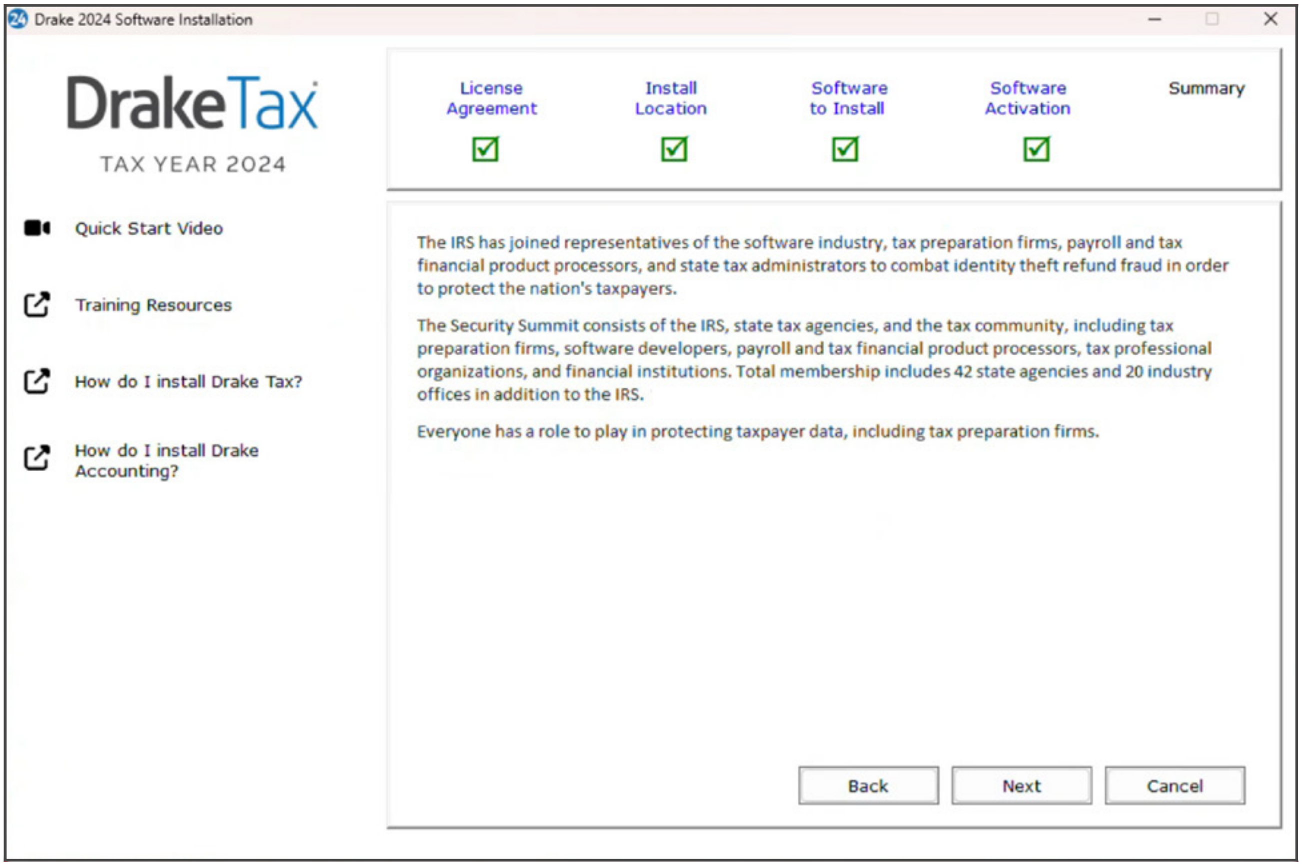
Install Drake Tax 2024 is marked by default; test returns must be installed with the preseason release and any initial Drake Tax installation. Select any desired state installs, and click **Next** to continue.



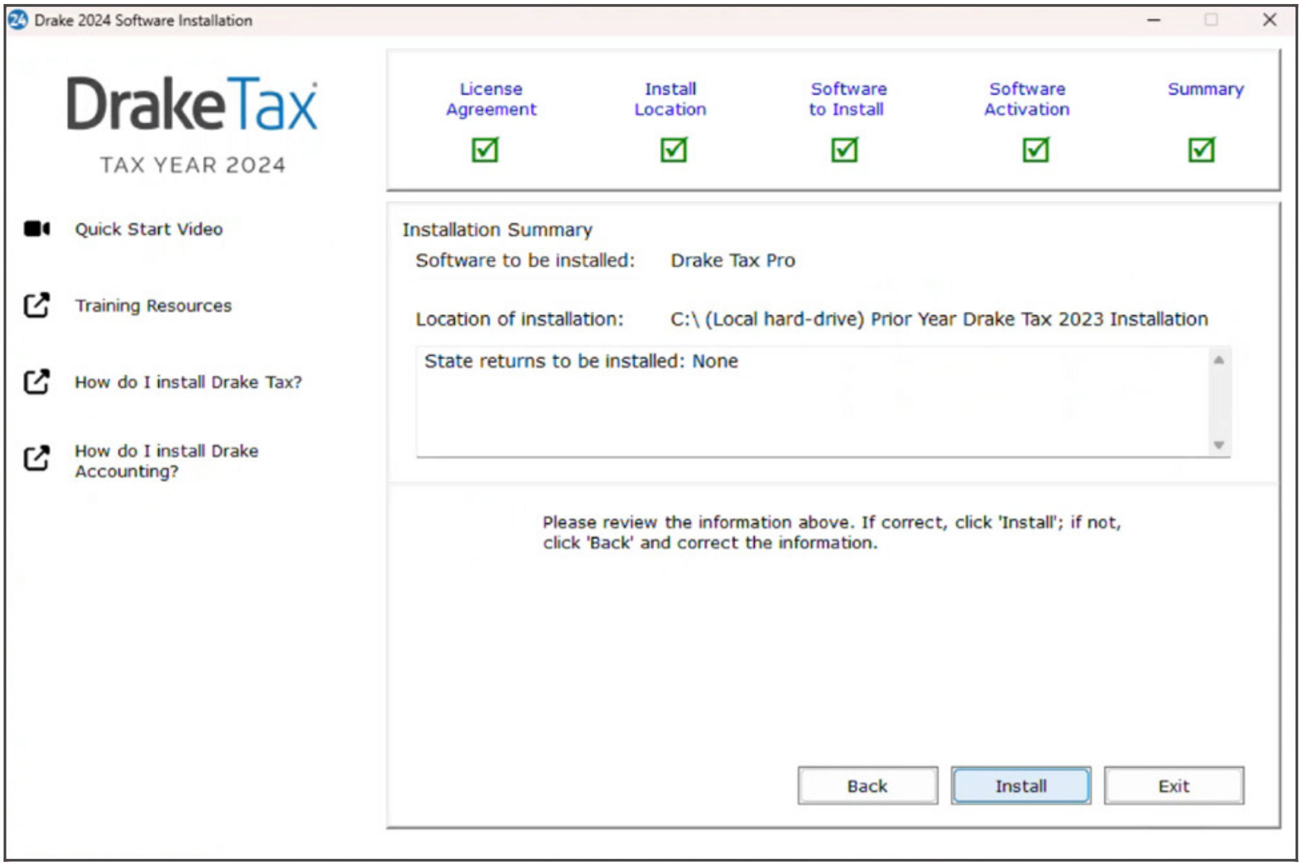
Select the applicable software version. If you have a **Licensed version**, enter your Drake Software **Account number** and **Serial number**. Click **Next**.



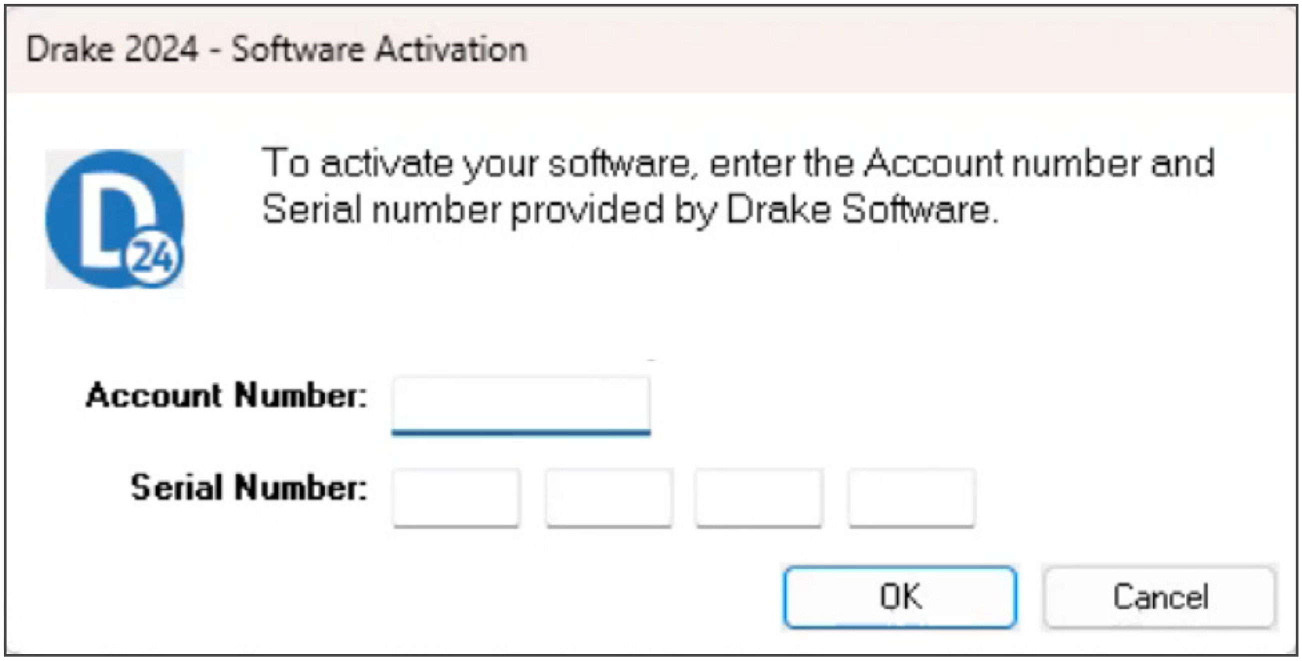
Carefully read each **Summary** page, clicking **Next** to proceed.



Once you have finished reading the **Summary**, check that all the information displayed is correct. If not, click **Back** and make the required changes. Once you are ready, **Install** Drake Tax.

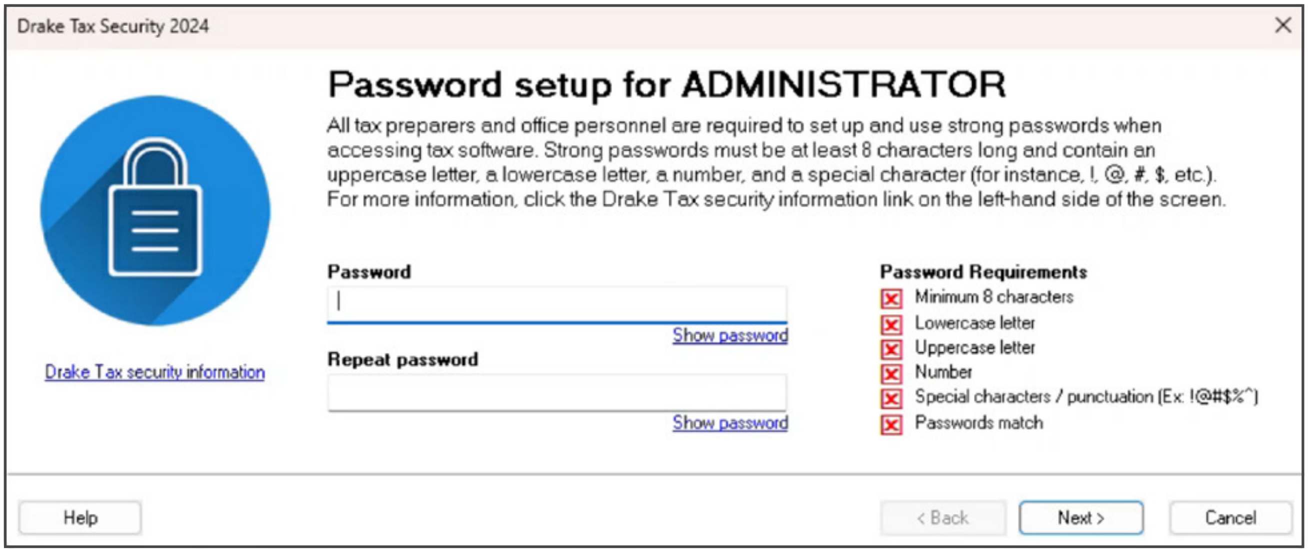


Enter your **Account Number** and **Serial Number** to activate your software. Press **OK** when finished.

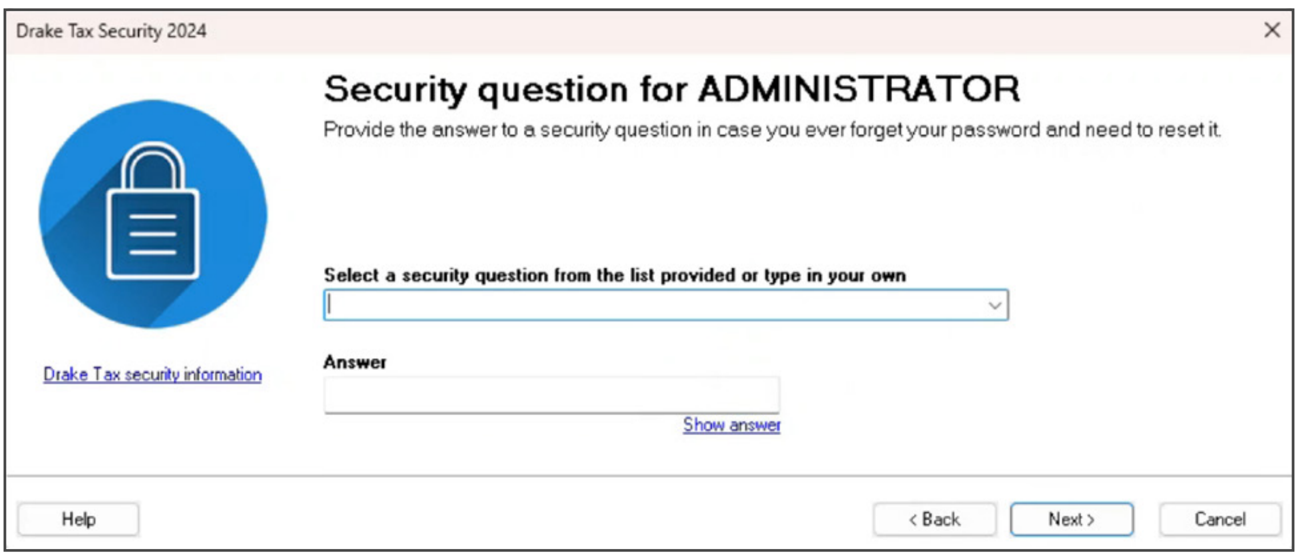


SETUP

The first time you open the program, you are prompted to set an administrator password. The password must be a minimum of eight characters and have at least one uppercase letter, lowercase letter, number, and special character. Confirm the entered password by re-entering it in the **Repeat Password** field, then click **Next**.



Select and answer a security question. Click **Next**.



MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

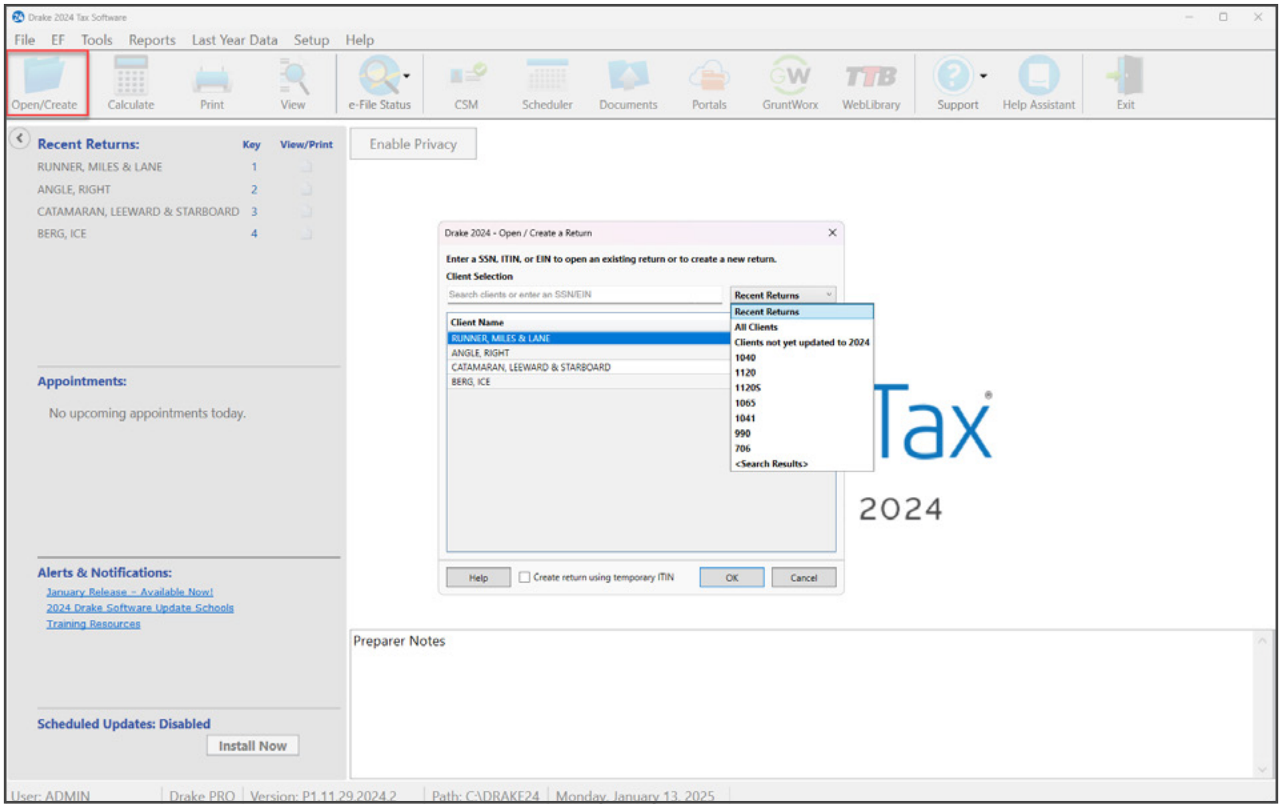
The **Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)** window is opened next. MFA is activated automatically. The Admin may either proceed with MFA or opt out of MFA by selecting **I choose to OPT OUT of enabling MFA at this time**. The primary admin can change MFA settings at any time from **Setup > Preparer(s)**.

OPEN A RETURN

To begin entering data for a return, click **Open/Create** from the Drake Tax **Home** window toolbar.

To open an existing return in Drake Tax, select a return from the list, or enter the taxpayer's ID number or name. Use the filters on the right side to show **Recent Returns**, **All Clients**, **Clients not yet updated**, or filter by return type. To create a new return, enter the client's ID number, and click **OK**.

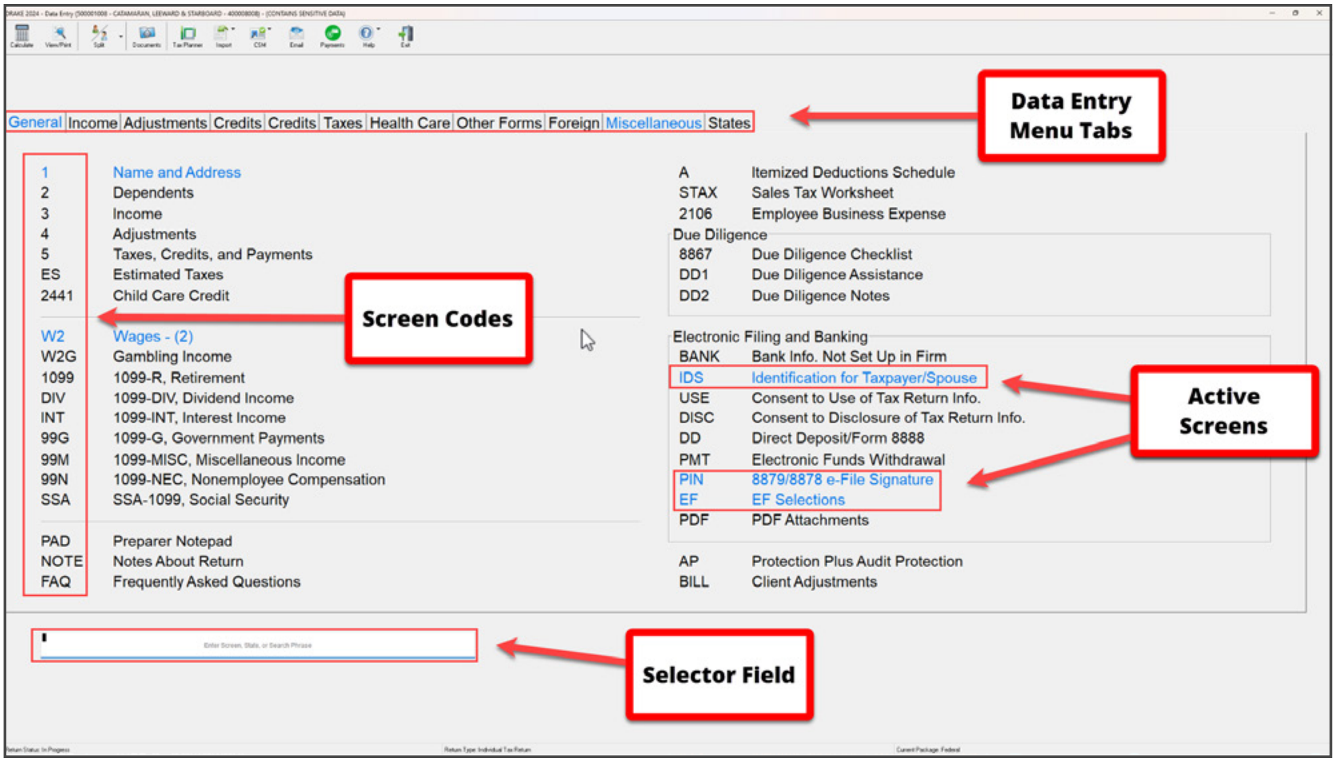
To view a completed practice return in Drake Tax, enter a test SSN (500-00-1001 to 500-00-1008).



DATA ENTRY

This is the **Data Entry Menu** of an individual 1040 return. To open a data entry screen, click the appropriate line, or enter the screen code, state abbreviation, or form number in the **Selector** field, and press ENTER. You may also enter keywords, phrases, or numbers in the **Selector** field to locate specific data within a return.

Note: Tabs and screen names in blue indicate data is present.

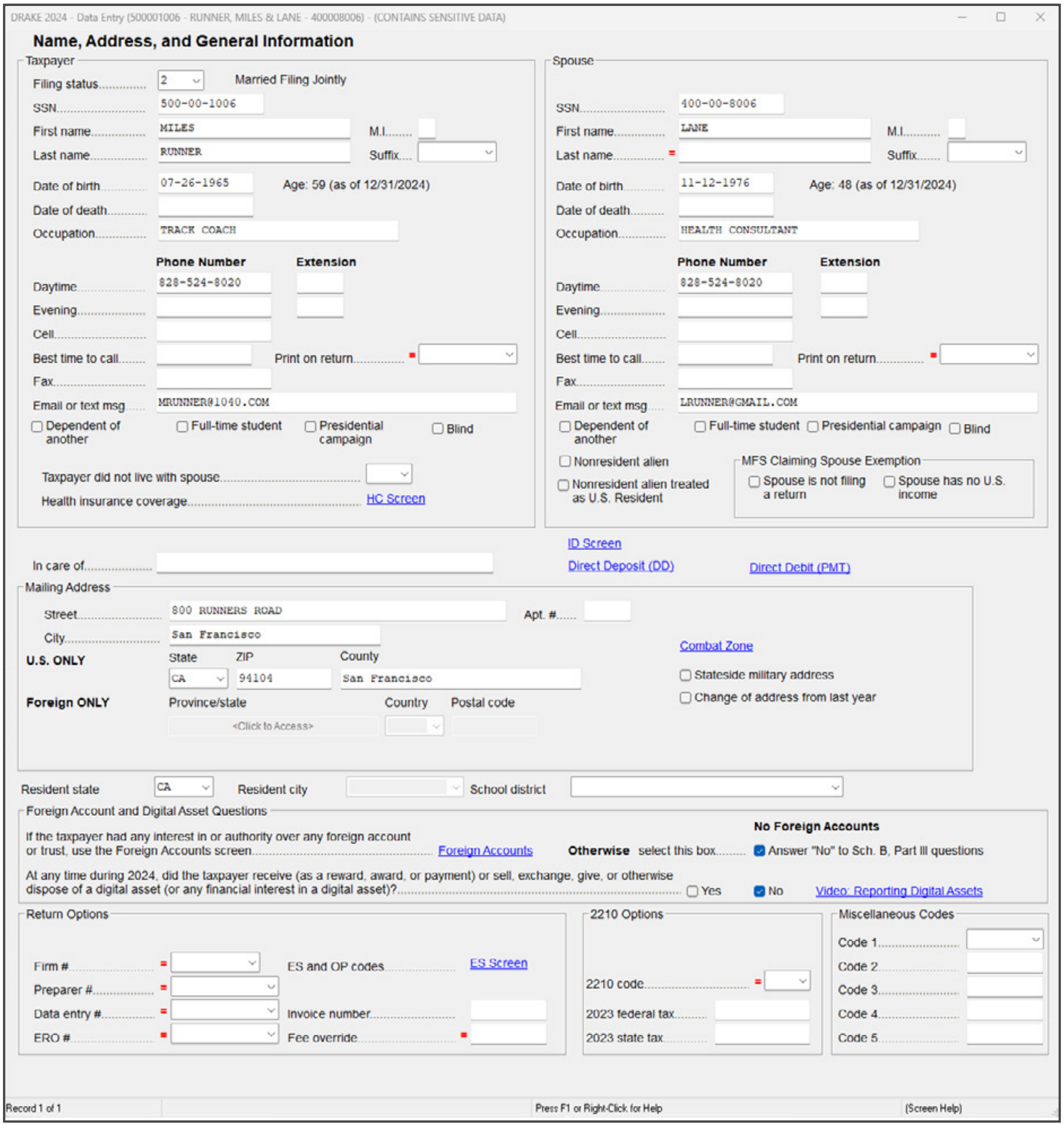


NAME AND ADDRESS

To open the **Name and Address** screen, click the screen name from the menu, or type 1 in the **Selector** field, and press ENTER. The **Name and Address** screen is normally the first screen completed on a new return.

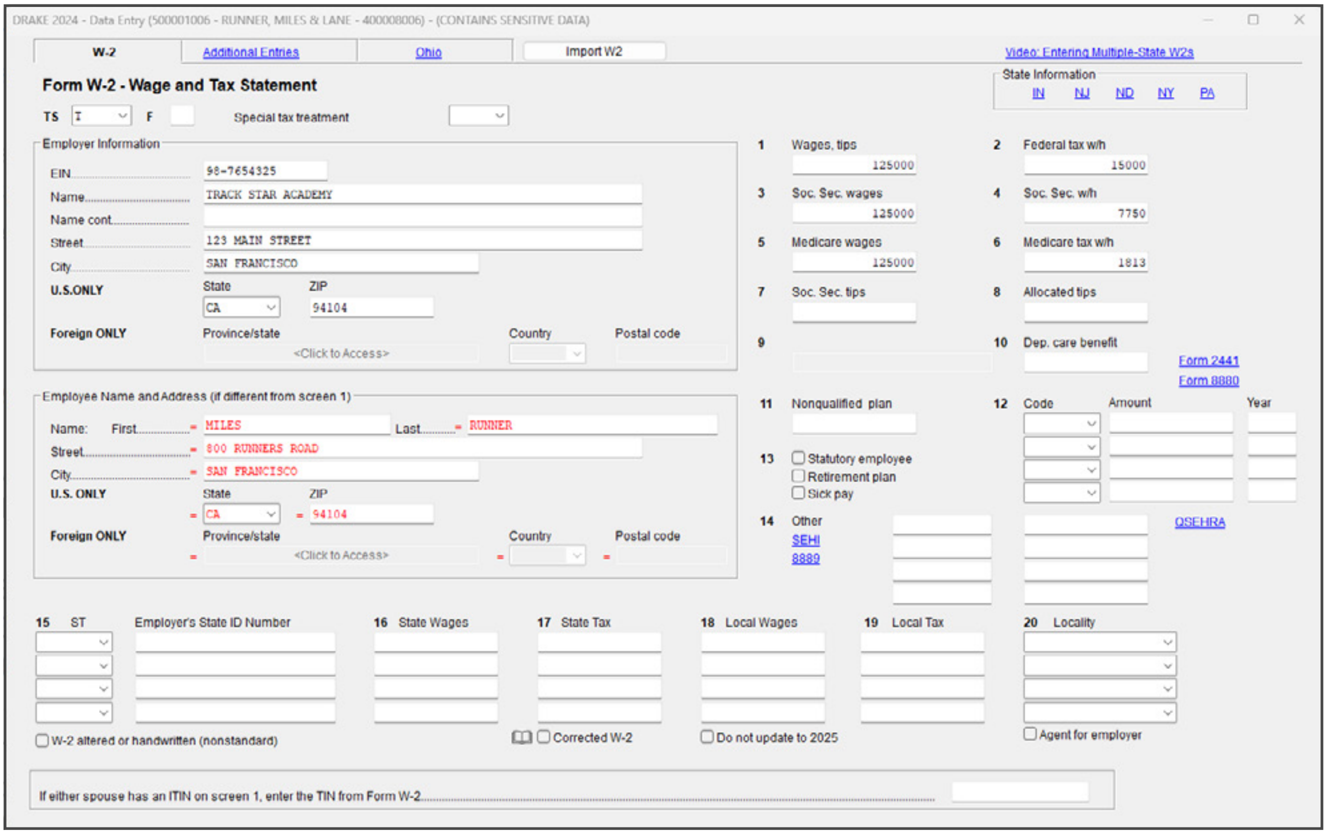
Enter the taxpayer's street address. Entering a **ZIP** code automatically completes the **City**, **State**, **County**, and **Resident State** fields.

By default, the return is assigned to the preparer logged in to Drake Tax. To choose a different preparer, make a selection from the **Preparer #** drop list.



FORM W-2

Type W2 in the **Selector** field, and press Enter, or click **W2** to enter Form W-2 information. Enter the W-2 information as it appears on the taxpayer's actual form. Use the **TS** drop list to indicate if the W-2 belongs to the taxpayer (**T**) or spouse (**S**). Enter the employer's **EIN** (Employer Identification Number); the employer's information is saved and automatically used on subsequent returns using the same EIN.

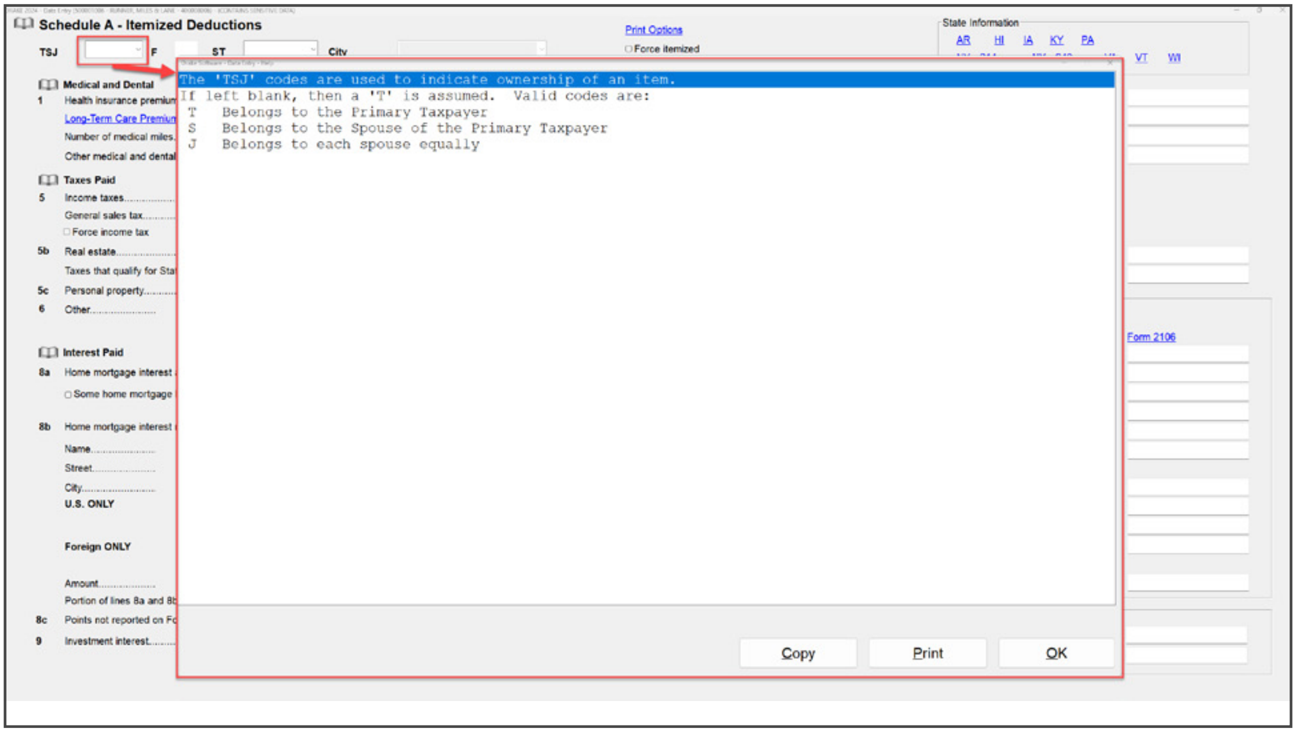


Press Page Down to enter additional Forms W-2. When finished, press Esc to save the entries and return to the **Data Entry Menu**.

FIELD HELP

Field helps provide information about a selected field. There are three ways to access field helps:

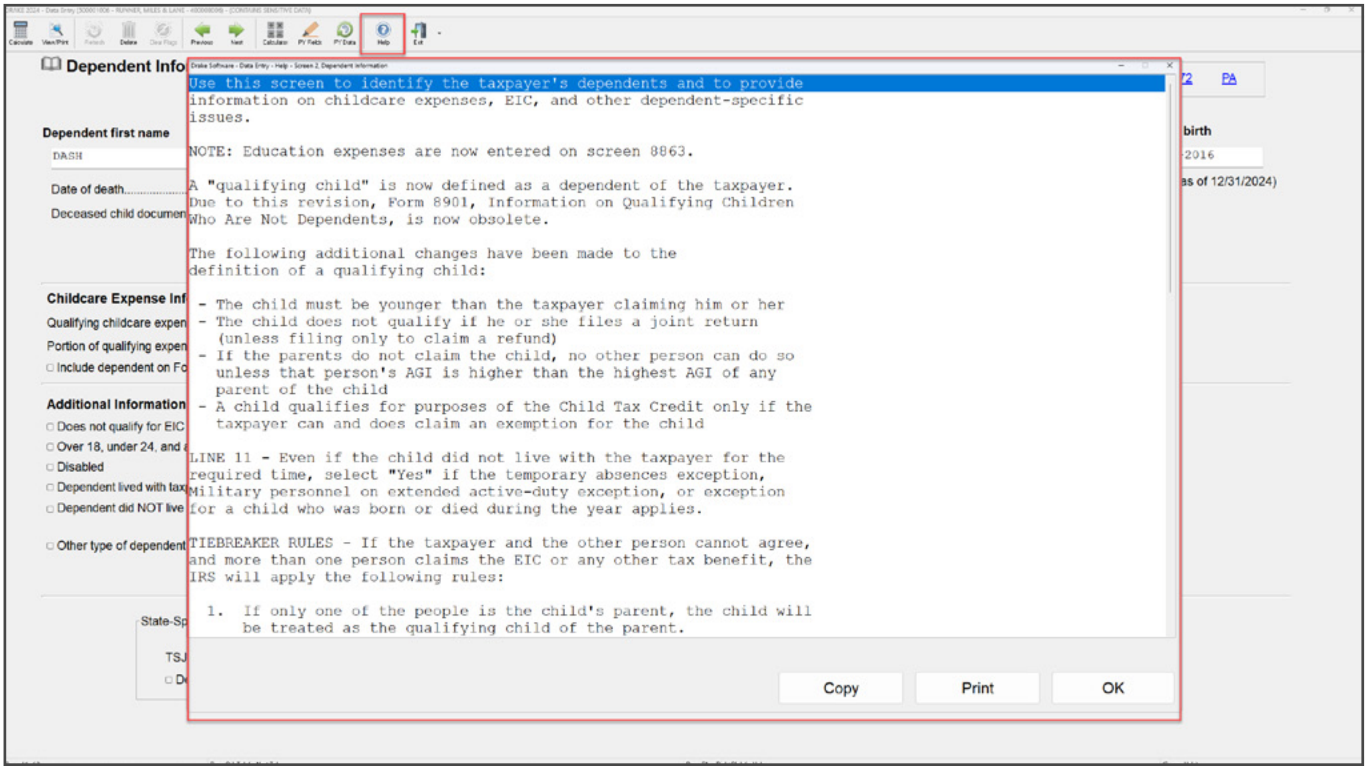
- Click inside a field and press F1.
- Click inside a field and press SHIFT+?.
- Right-click in a field and select **Help > Help for this Field**.



The **Data Entry Toolbar** appears on data entry screens when the pointer is moved to the top of the screen. Click the toolbar buttons to quickly perform the various functions. To close the toolbar, move your pointer away from the top of the screen.

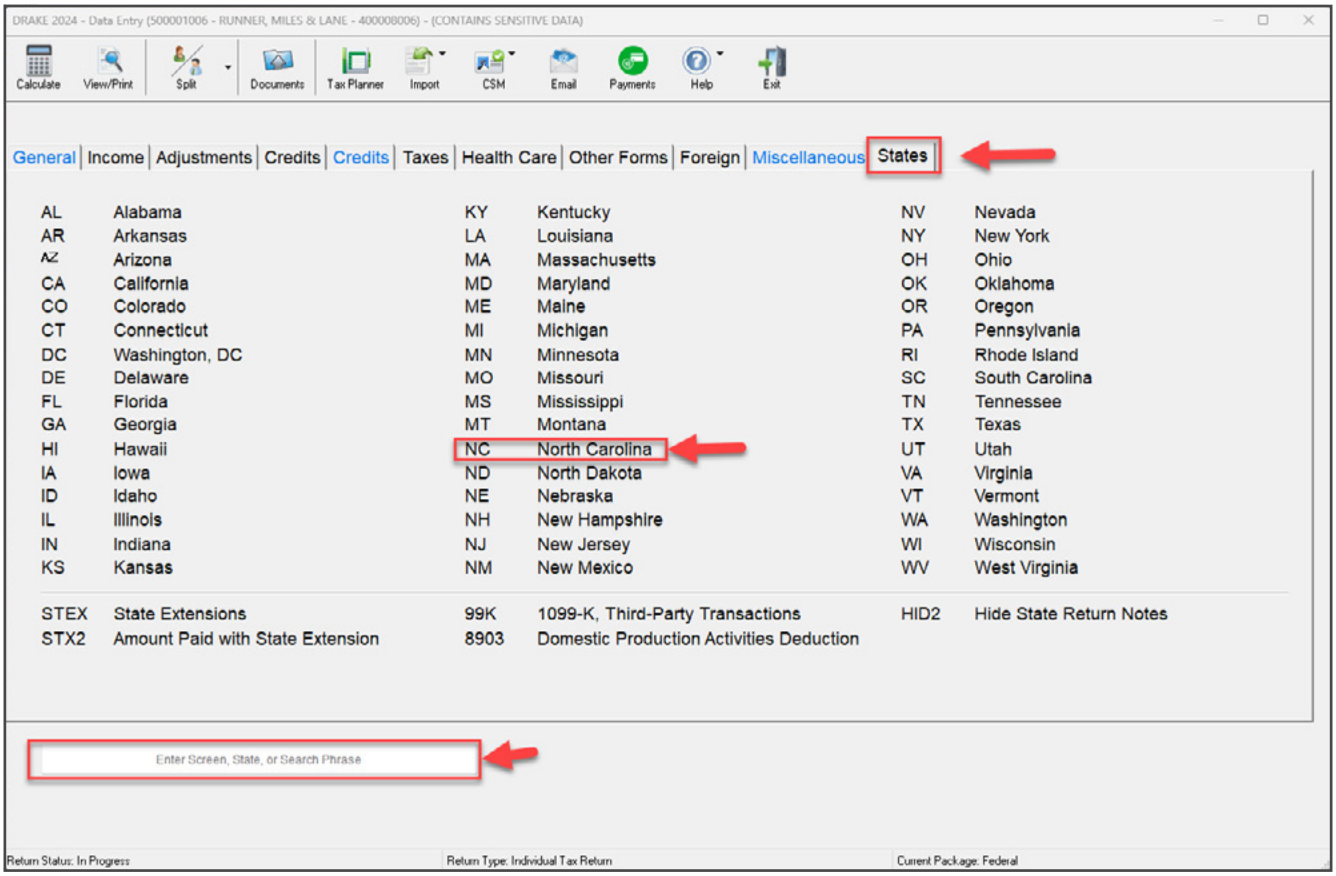
SCREEN HELP

Most data entry screens have screen helps to provide more information about the open screen. To open a screen help, click the **Help** button from the data entry toolbar, or select **Screen Help** from the right-click menu.

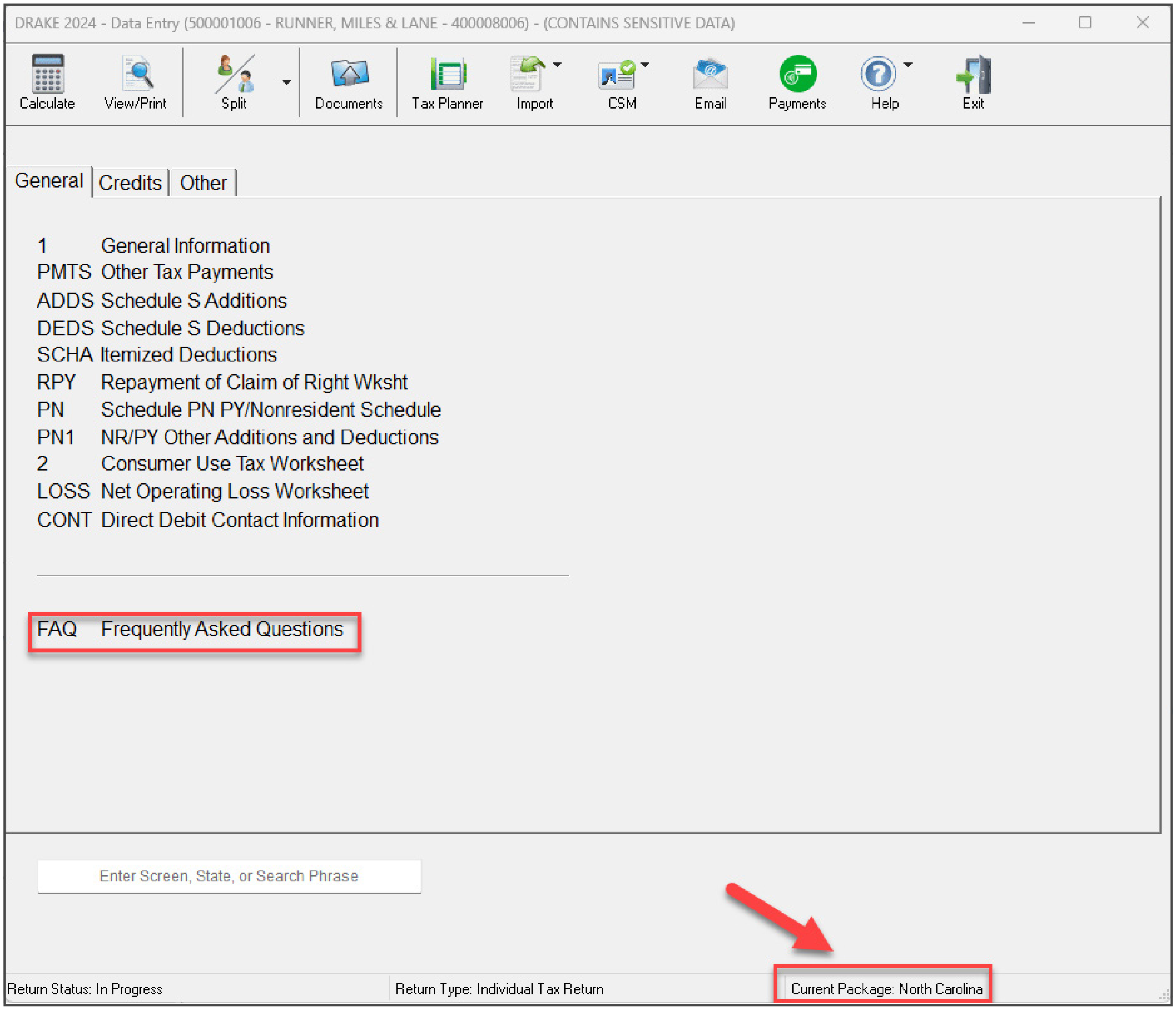


STATE AND CITY PROGRAMS

Drake Tax produces state returns using the data entered on federal screens. To override or supplement information from federal screens, enter the state code in the **Selector** field and press Enter, or select the state from the **States** tab. Note that applicable state modules must be installed in order to access state data entry screens.



Available forms are found on each state's **Data Entry Menu**.

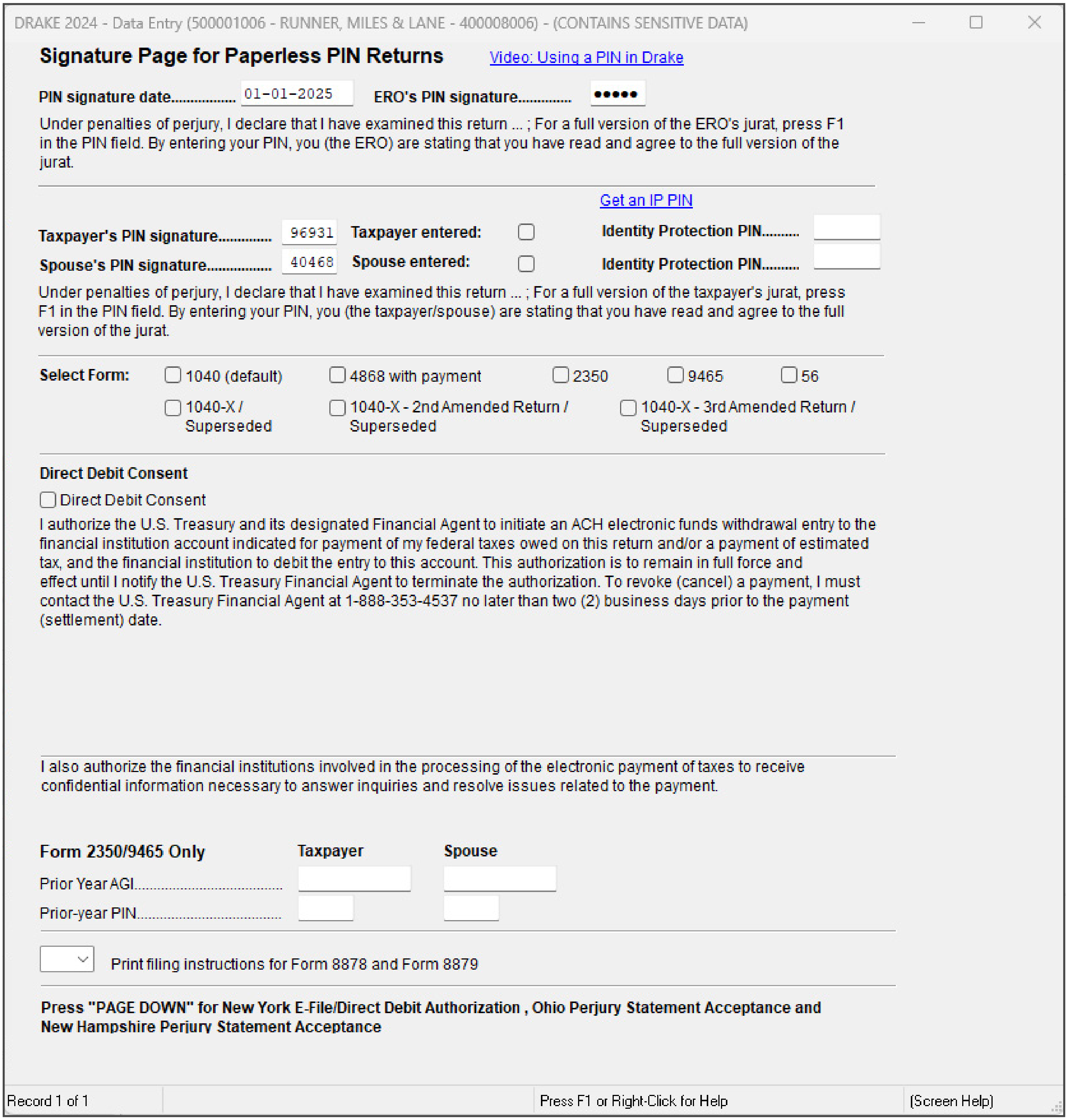


An **FAQ** screen is included with each tax package in Drake Tax. It is accessible from the **General** tab of the **Data Entry Menu** or by typing FAQ into the **Selector** field and pressing ENTER. FAQ content varies by state and package.

The current package is displayed on the bottom-right of the screen.

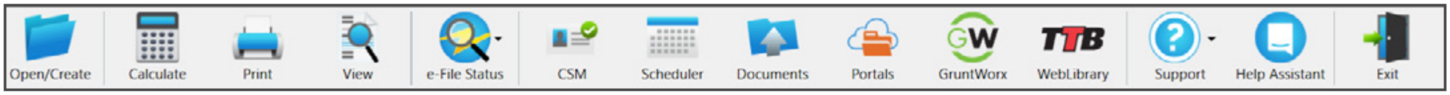
SIGN THE RETURN

Type PIN in the **Selector** field, or from the **General** tab of the **Data Entry Menu**, click **PIN** to open the **PIN** screen. Enter the **PIN signature date** or press ALT+D to automatically enter today's date, then enter the **ERO's PIN signature**. The taxpayers' PIN signatures are automatically produced if the option **Auto-generate taxpayer(s) PIN (1040 Only)** is selected at **Setup > Options > EF** tab. Taxpayers can override the default PIN and enter their own, if desired.



CALCULATION RESULTS

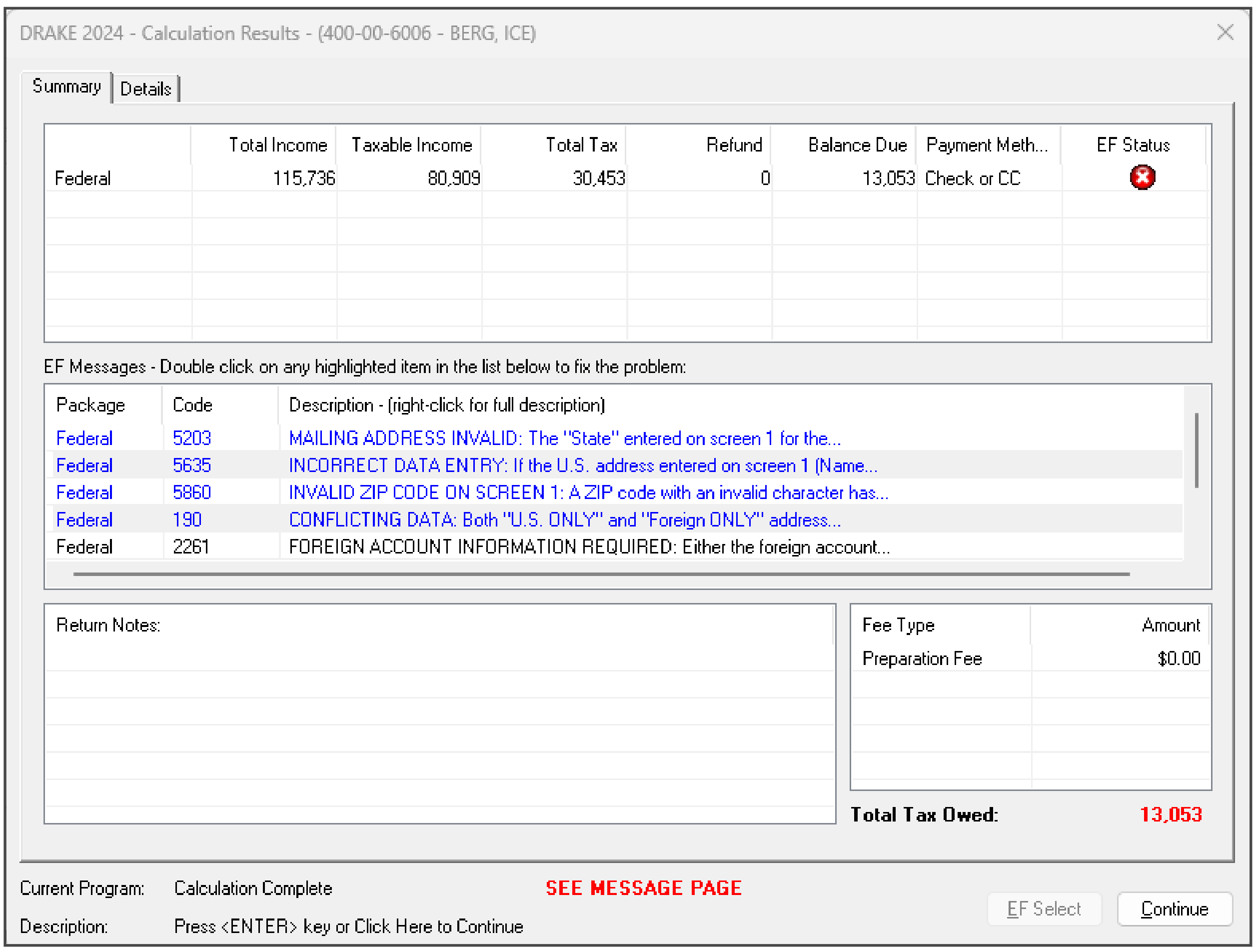
To calculate a return from data entry, click the **Calculate** button from the **Data Entry Menu** or from the data entry toolbar on any entry screen (or press CTRL+C).



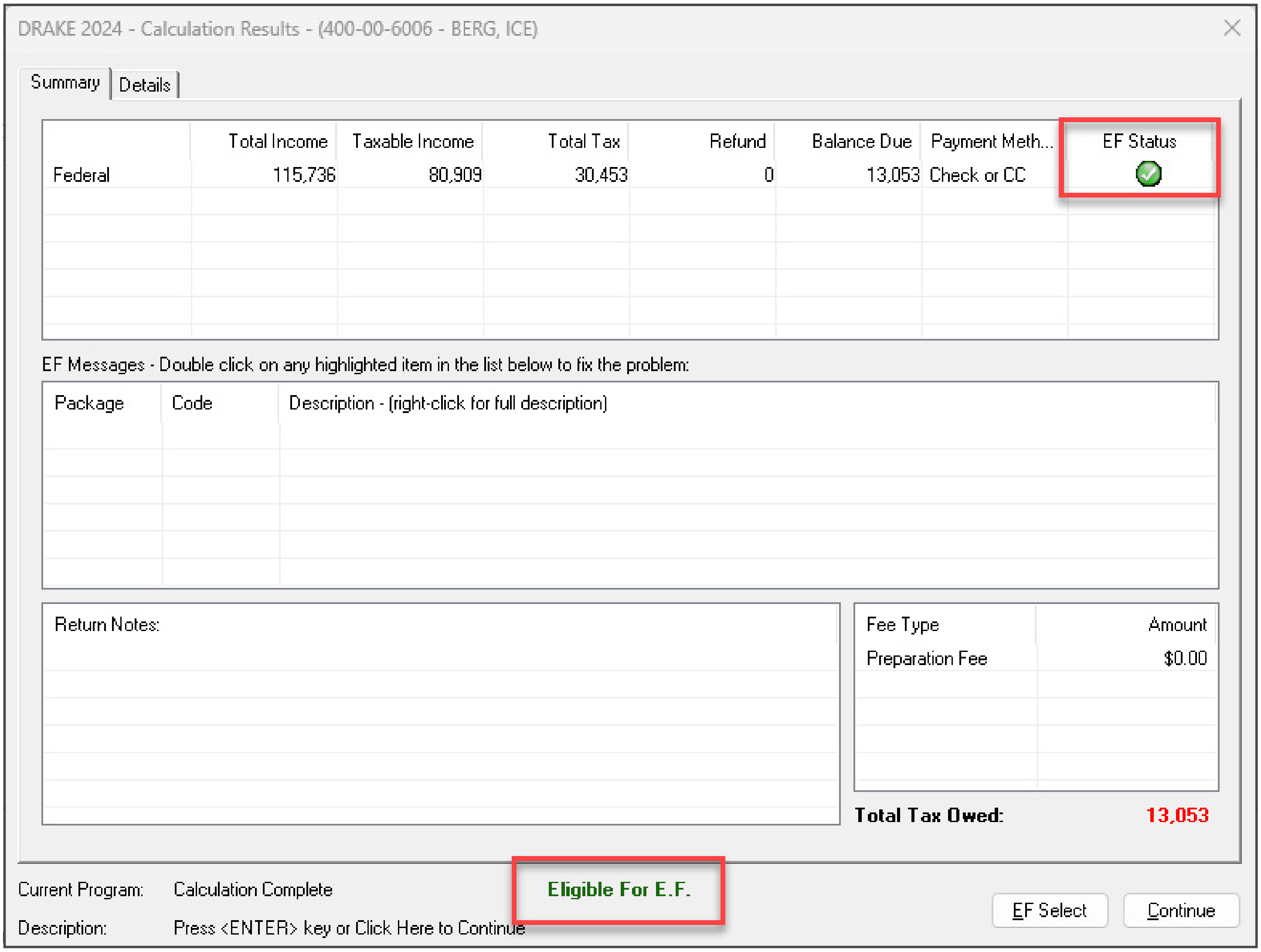
The **Calculation Results** window displays the taxpayer's total income, taxable income, total tax refund amount, balance due, payment method, and the e-file eligibility of the return.

The **EF Status** column displays a green check mark for each return that is eligible for e-file. A red "X" indicates the return is not eligible for e-file and has an EF Message.

EF Messages are displayed in the center of the **Calculation Results** window. Review EF Messages by right-clicking to read the full description of the problem. If an EF Message is blue, double-click to open the data entry screen that contains the error. All identified issues must be corrected in order for a return to be e-filed.



Once all EF Messages are cleared, eligible returns can be selected for e-file.



VIEW AND PRINT A RETURN

At any time during data entry, click **View/Print** or press Ctrl+V to view the return. All forms produced for the return are listed in the forms tree in the left pane.

Click the plus sign [+] to expand categories and the minus sign [-] to collapse them.

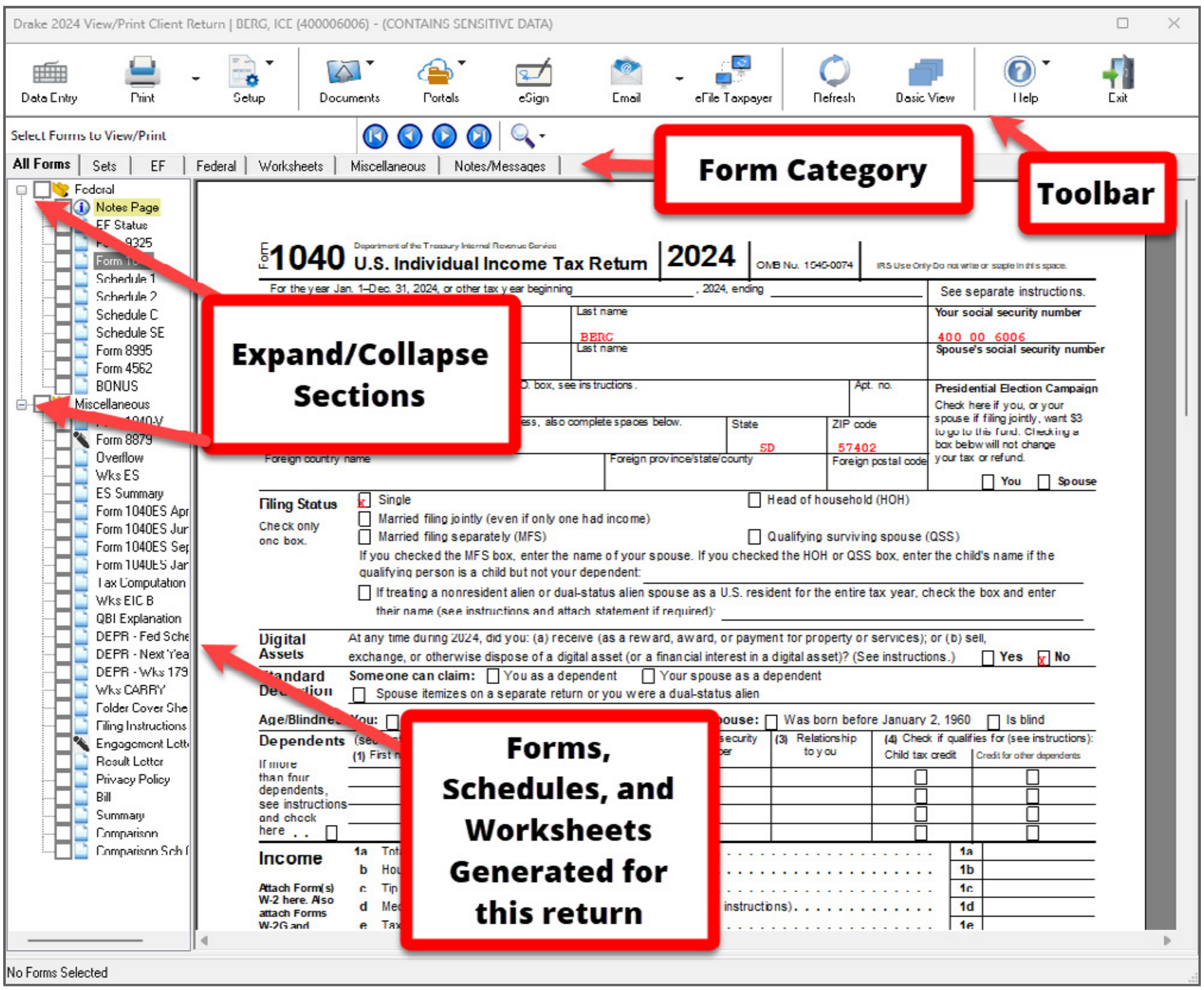
Click check boxes or use the arrow keys on your keyboard to navigate the forms. The selected form is displayed in the viewing pane.

Click a section header to select the entire group of forms for printing, or select specific forms.

Press Ctrl+P to print all selected forms or to print only the form displayed in the viewing pane.

Press Ctrl+Q to quick print the current form. In this example, Form 1040 will be printed.

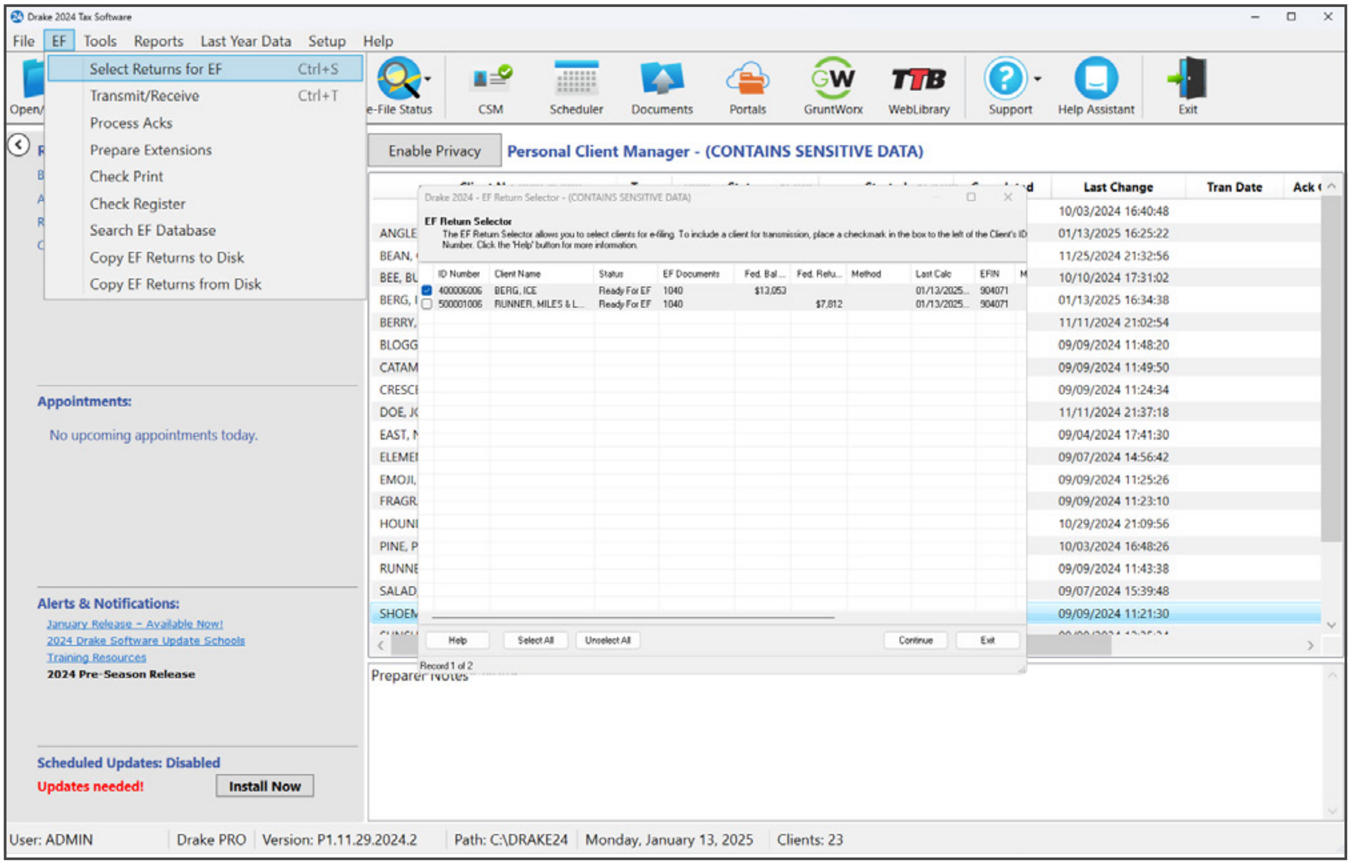
To close View/Print mode and return to data entry, press Ctrl+E or click **Data Entry** from the toolbar.



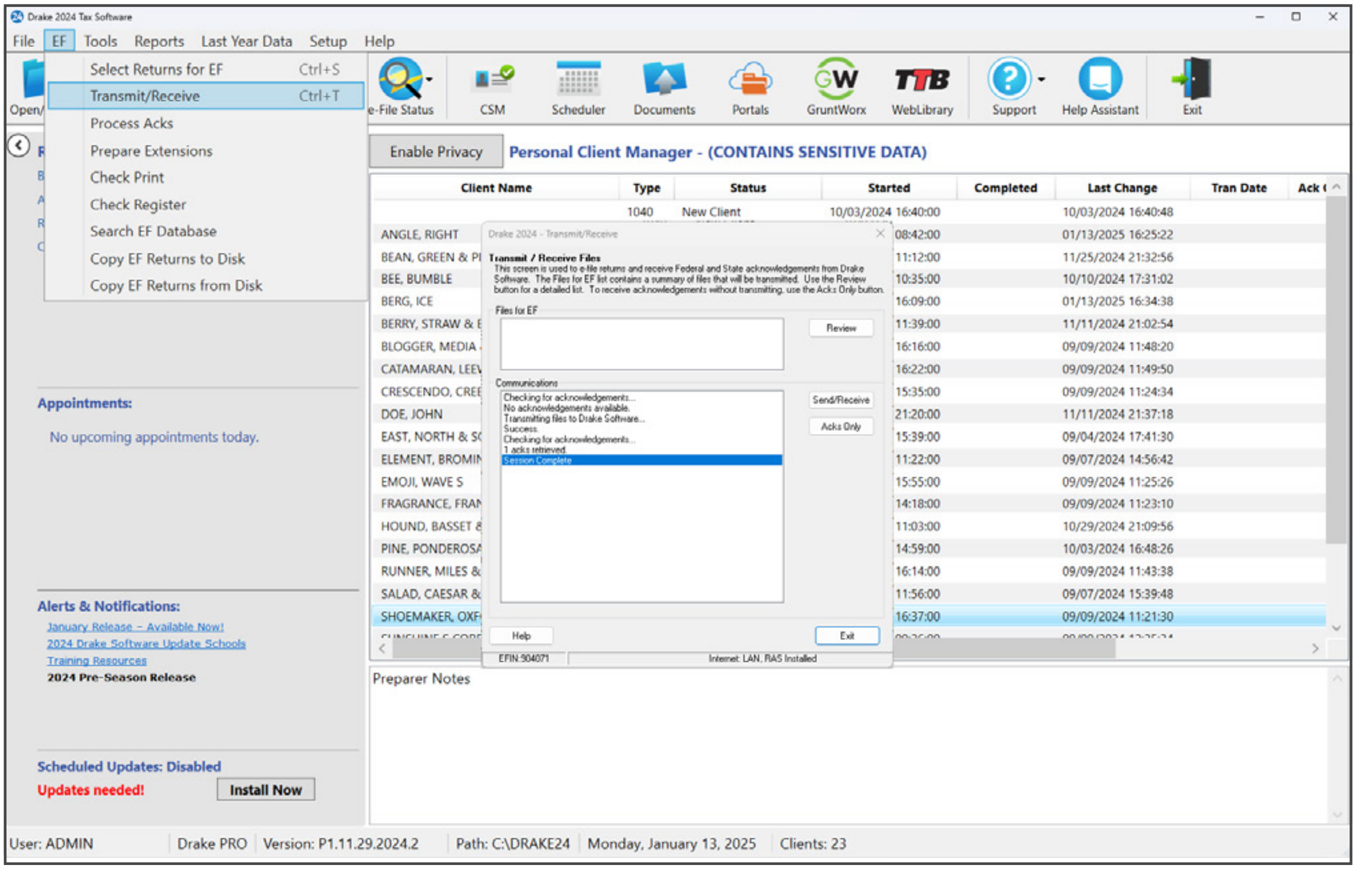
E-FILE A RETURN

e-Filing in Drake Tax is a simple, three-step process.

1. **Select Returns for e-File**. Choose **EF > Select Returns for EF** from the **Home** window menu bar. Select the check box to the left of the return to select it for e-file, and click **Continue**. The **Report Viewer** lists the returns selected for transmission. Click **Exit**.

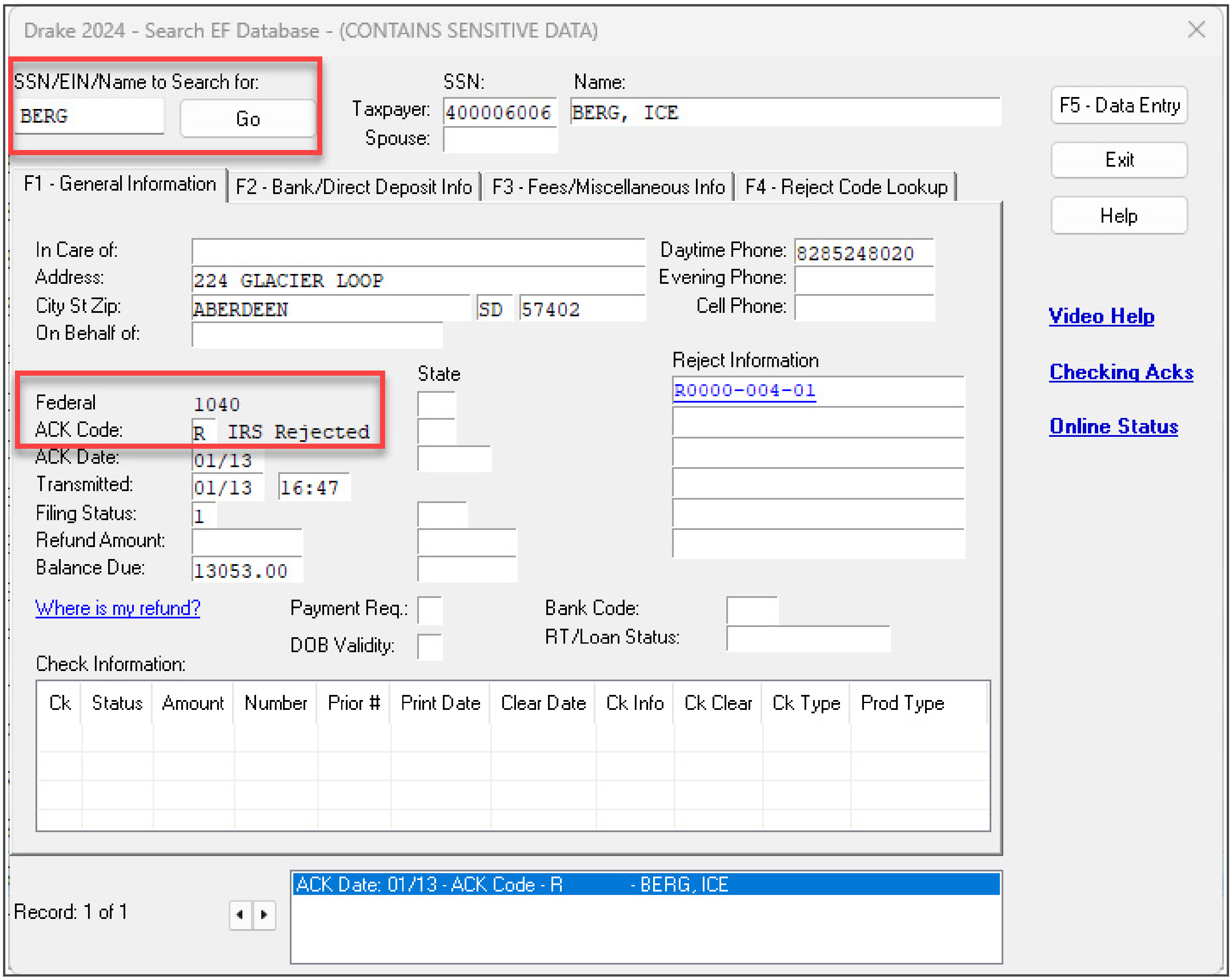


2. **Transmit Returns**. Go to **EF > Transmit/Receive** and click **Send/Receive** to transmit the return and pick up acknowledgements.

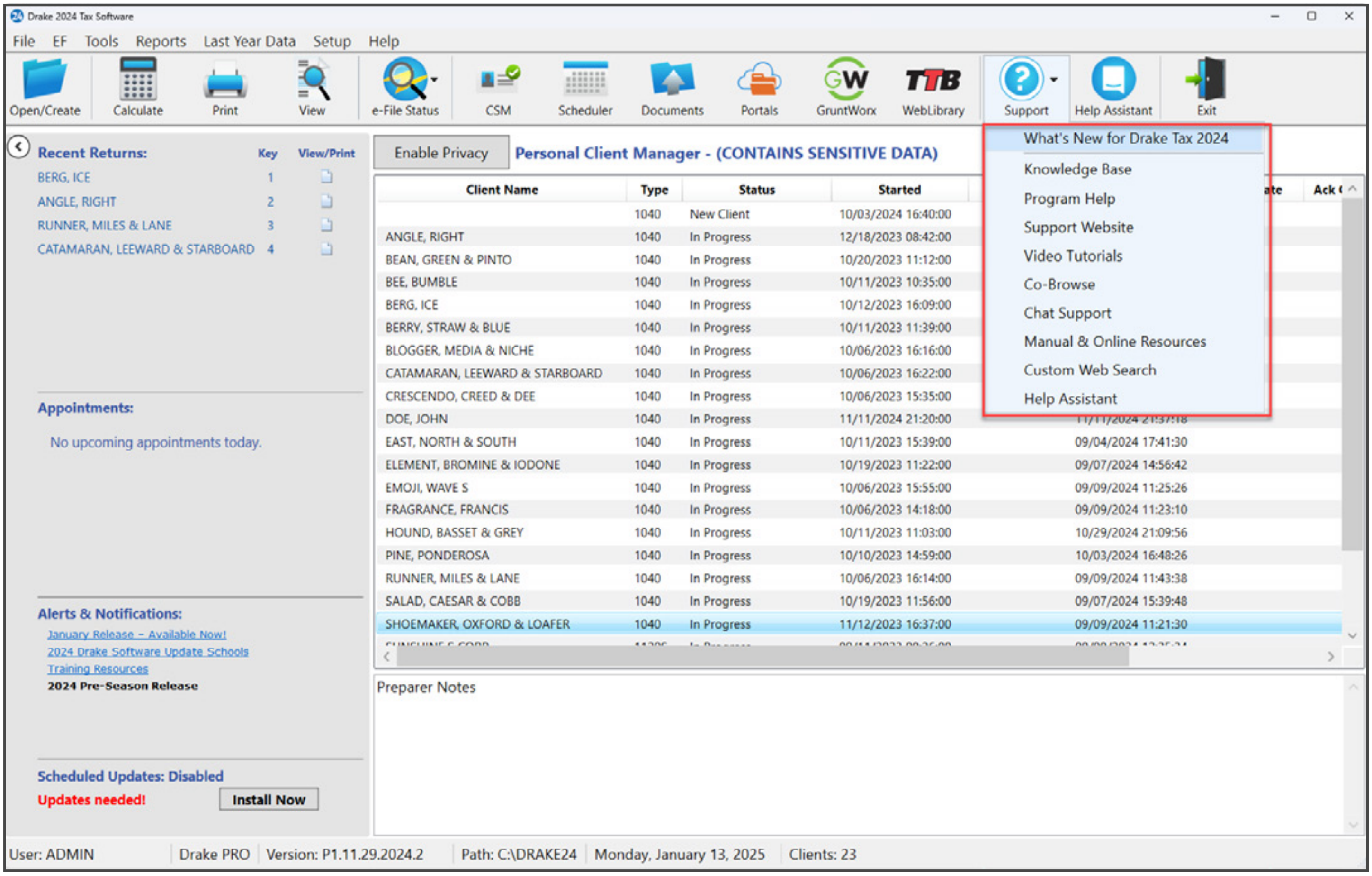


3. **Process Acknowledgments**. Finally, go to **EF > Process Acks**. Your acknowledgments are posted to the EF database. You should receive a "T" ack for a test return.

To review transmission details, go to **EF > Search EF Database**. The e-file database is a searchable database that displays information about all returns your office has e-filed for the current tax year. Enter the return's SSN, ITIN, EIN, or last name, and click **Go**. The EF database displays data about the return and its associated bank products, fees, reject codes, and more. Click the tabs to access more information about the return.



PROGRAM HELP



Drake Software offers a wide range of support resources, including a variety of online and program helps.

Click the **Support** button from the Drake Tax **Home** window toolbar to access many resources, including:

- **What's New for Drake Tax 2024**, an overview with brief descriptions of updates and enhancements to Drake Tax peripheral programs, along with changes to tax forms and tax laws made by the IRS.
- **Drake Software Knowledge Base**, an online reference source containing answers to common tax and program questions.
- **Drake Software Program Help**, a searchable "Drake encyclopedia," arranged in "books." Program Help includes a Search feature, a searchable index, and a Favorites list. Program Help answers many of the most commonly asked questions about the tax program.
- **Drake Software Support Site**, a website with links to all of our online help resources, including support and training options and many other helpful webpages.
- **Video Tutorials**, a compendium of more than 200 instructional videos showing how to use Drake Tax and related programs.
- **Manual and Online Resources**, a link to Drake Tax manuals, practice returns, IRS publications, and Drake Software shipment letters. All resources are in PDF format, readable online, and available for download.
- **Custom Web Search**, a reference tool that allows you to search three default websites for answers—the IRS website (*irs.gov*), Drake Software's Knowledge Base (*DrakeSoftware.com/Site/*), and Drake Software's tax preparer blog, TaxingSubjects® (*DrakeSoftware.com/Blog*). It also allows you to search any other websites you wish to add.