

2026 Year-End Bookkeeping Readiness Checklist

Use this checklist to organize the books before tax planning and return preparation. Mark each item complete, assign an owner, and retain support for material balances.

1. Cash and processors

☐	Reconcile every bank and credit-card account through year-end.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Investigate old outstanding checks, deposits, and reconciliation differences.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Reconcile gross sales, refunds, fees, chargebacks, reserves, and net processor deposits.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Confirm transfers, credit-card payments, and loan proceeds were not recorded as income or expense.	Owner: _____	Date: _____

2. Revenue and cutoff

☐	Tie invoices, point-of-sale reports, e-commerce systems, cash receipts, and deposits to the general ledger.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Review December sales deposited in January and customer advances for proper cutoff.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Reconcile Form 1099-K activity to gross receipts and document differences.	Owner: _____	Date: _____

3. Receivables and payables

☐	Review A/R aging for old, disputed, or uncollectible balances.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Review A/P for duplicates, unapplied credits, old checks, and owner-paid expenses.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Classify customer deposits, retainers, gift cards, and deferred revenue correctly.	Owner: _____	Date: _____

4. Inventory and cost of goods sold

☐	Complete and document a physical or reliable cycle count.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Investigate negative quantities, shrinkage, damage, obsolete goods, and items in transit.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Reconcile beginning inventory, purchases, direct costs, ending inventory, and COGS.	Owner: _____	Date: _____

5. Fixed assets and vehicles

☐	List material purchases with cost, purchase date, and placed-in-service date.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
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☐	Report sold, traded, abandoned, or destroyed assets and proceeds.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Reconcile vehicle mileage, business use, financing, and year-end odometer readings.	Owner: _____	Date: _____

6. Debt and liabilities

☐	Tie loans and leases to lender statements or amortization schedules.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Separate principal, interest, fees, and new borrowings.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Reconcile payroll tax, sales tax, gift cards, customer deposits, and deferred revenue.	Owner: _____	Date: _____

7. Owner and entity activity

☐	Separate draws, distributions, contributions, wages, reimbursements, and loans.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Document owner loans and repayment terms.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Review S corporation compensation, shareholder health insurance, and accountable-plan reimbursements.	Owner: _____	Date: _____

8. Payroll and benefits

☐	Reconcile payroll registers, bank withdrawals, Forms 941, and the general ledger.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Verify employee names, addresses, SSNs, benefits, fringe benefits, and bonuses.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Confirm 2026 cash-tip, occupation-code, and qualified-overtime reporting data.	Owner: _____	Date: _____

9. Contractors and Forms 1099

☐	Collect complete Forms W-9 before year-end.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Review worker classification, legal names, TINs, payment methods, and totals.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Apply the 2026 thresholds and exceptions correctly.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Confirm IRIS access, e-file responsibility, and state filing requirements.	Owner: _____	Date: _____

10. Close package and controls

☐	Prepare the P&L, balance sheet, trial balance, general ledger, and reconciliation reports.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Retain A/R, A/P, inventory, fixed-asset, debt, payroll, contractor, owner, and tax schedules.	Owner: _____	Date: _____

☐	Compare results with prior year and budget; explain material variances.	Owner: _____	Date: _____
☐	Lock the books after approved adjustments and archive the final package.	Owner: _____	Date: _____

Tax preparer handoff package

☐	Final profit-and-loss statement and balance sheet	☐	Trial balance and detailed general ledger
☐	Bank, credit-card, loan, and processor statements	☐	Reconciliation reports for all balance-sheet accounts
☐	Accounts-receivable and accounts-payable aging reports	☐	Inventory count and valuation support
☐	Fixed-asset additions, disposals, and vehicle records	☐	Payroll registers, Forms 941, and year-end payroll reports
☐	Contractor report and completed Forms W-9	☐	Sales-tax, payroll-tax, PTET, and estimated-tax confirmations
☐	Owner contribution, distribution, reimbursement, and loan schedules	☐	Documentation for material, unusual, or related-party transactions

Final notes and unresolved items

This checklist is educational and should be adapted to the business, entity type, accounting method, industry, states, and reporting obligations.