



## Individual Income Tax Engagement Letter - 2020

January 15, 2021

Dear Client:

We thank you all for your continued partnership with our firm. To minimize the possibility of a misunderstanding between us, we are setting forth pertinent information about the services we will perform for you.

*On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a pandemic. The duration and impact of the pandemic have been expansive, and several stimulus packages have been signed into law in the United States (“U.S.”) providing economic relief to businesses and individuals. Many of those relief measures have been in the form of tax provisions, and some of those tax provisions have retroactive application. If you have any questions regarding the application of these economic tax relief measures, please ask us for advice in that regard.*

### Scope of Engagement:

We will prepare your 2020 income tax return(s) solely for filing with the Internal Revenue Service and applicable state and local tax authorities. They are not intended to benefit or influence any third party, either to obtain debt or equity financing or for any other purpose.

To assist you in gathering and organizing the necessary information required for the preparation of your individual income tax returns, we will furnish you with a tax organizer. Providing us with the completed tax organizer and legible documentation will help to ensure that you are not overlooking important information that may be necessary for complete and accurate returns, as well as may help to minimize our fees.

### Responsibilities of Client:

The initial due date for individual income tax returns is **April 15, 2021**. We recommend that you provide us with as much of your tax information as possible by **March 1, 2021**. By this date you should have received all W-2s, 1099s, and other standard tax documents. We will plan on extending your return if documentation is not received by **March 15, 2021**. This ensures we have time to properly review your information and file accurate returns.

*Given the multitude of new tax credits, stimulus payments, and other changes to the tax code, it is very important that you complete your tax organizers this year for an efficient “interview” process. Please review our **2020 Client Letter** for various options and formats for completing your tax organizer.*

If we are otherwise unable to complete your return(s) by April 15th, we will assume that you want us to prepare an extension of time to file your returns; however, you will need to provide us with an authorization before we can file the extension on your behalf. You should keep in mind that this would be an extension of



time to file the returns; however, any tax estimated to be due would need to be paid with the extension request to minimize exposure to penalties and interest. We assume no liability for late filing or late payment penalties.

You are responsible for determining your state or local tax filing obligations with any state or local tax authorities, including, but not limited to, income, franchise, sales, use, and property taxes. Our services are not intended to determine whether you have filing requirements in other taxing jurisdictions other than the one(s) you have informed us of. Our firm is available under the terms of a separate engagement letter to provide a nexus study that will enable us to determine whether any other state tax filings are required.

You are confirming that you will furnish us with all the information required for preparing the returns. This includes, but is not limited to, providing us with the information necessary to identify (1) all states and foreign countries in which you “do business” or derive income (directly or indirectly) and (2) the extent of business operations in each relevant state and/or country. We will not audit or verify the data you submit, although we may ask you to clarify it, or furnish us with additional data. You should retain all the documents, books, and records that form the basis of your income and deductions. The documents may be necessary to prove the accuracy and completeness of the returns to a taxing authority. If you have any questions as to the type of records required, please ask us for advice in that regard.

Please note that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) considers virtual currency (e.g., Bitcoin) as property for U.S. federal tax purposes. As such, any transactions in, or transactions that use, virtual currency are subject to the same general tax principles that apply to other property transactions. If you had virtual currency activity during the previous tax year, you may be subject to tax consequences associated with such transactions, and may have additional foreign reporting obligations. You agree to provide us with complete and accurate information regarding any transactions in, or transactions that have used, virtual currency during the applicable tax year. Please ask us for advice if you have any questions regarding the type of records required for virtual currency transactions.

### **Our Firm’s Responsibilities:**

We will use our professional judgment in preparing your returns. Given the magnitude of the economic tax relief provisions the U.S. stimulus packages have contained, as well as some new concepts introduced in the law, additional stated guidance from the Internal Revenue Service, and possibly from Congress in the form of technical corrections on certain income tax provisions may be forthcoming. We will use our professional judgment and expertise to assist you given the guidance as currently promulgated at the time our services are rendered. Subsequent developments issued by the applicable tax authorities may affect the information we have previously provided, and these effects may be material. Whenever we are aware that a possibly applicable tax law is unclear or that there are conflicting interpretations of the law by authorities (e.g., tax agencies and courts), we will share our knowledge and understanding of the possible positions that may be taken on your return. In accordance with our professional standards, we will follow whatever position you request, as long as it is consistent with the codes, regulations, and interpretations that have been promulgated.

If a taxing authority should later contest the position taken, there may be an assessment of additional tax, interest and penalties. We assume no liability for any such assessment of additional tax, penalties or interest.



In the event, however, that you ask us to take a tax position that in our professional judgment will not meet the applicable laws and standards as promulgated, we reserve the right to stop work and shall not be liable for any damages that occur as a result of ceasing to render services.

**Tax Payments, Penalties, and Disclosure Requirements:**

The law provides for a penalty to be imposed where a taxpayer makes a substantial understatement of their tax liability. Taxpayers may seek to avoid all or part of the penalty by showing (1) that they acted in good faith and there was reasonable cause for the understatement, (2) that the understatement was based on substantial authority, or (3) there was a reasonable basis for the position taken on the return and the relevant facts affecting the item's tax treatment were adequately disclosed on the return. You agree to advise us if you wish disclosure to be made in your returns or if you desire us to identify or perform further research with respect to any material tax issues for the purpose of ascertaining whether, in our opinion, there is "substantial authority" for the position proposed to be taken on such issue in your returns.

If your individual return includes business activities, please note that in 2018, a Supreme Court Ruling in *South Dakota v. Wayfair, Inc.* ("Wayfair") significantly impacted businesses that engage in out-of-state sales (i.e., remote sales). Wayfair opened the door for other states to redefine what is deemed to be "sufficient contact" from a physical presence standard, to a much broader standard that looks at a business's economic presence ("economic nexus") in a given state. How this may impact your business depends on the individual states from which you derive sales and whether they have adopted an economic nexus standard. As our engagement is limited to preparing the income tax returns for the jurisdictions of which we are made aware (by you), our firm is not rendering any services designed to assess your sales and use tax risks and potential exposure to substantial ("economic") nexus. By your signature below, you understand and acknowledge that you are responsible for compliance with applicable rules associated with the collection and remittance of state income tax, franchise tax, sales and use tax, and any other taxes for the various states in which you do business, and alerting us to your known filing requirements. If you require our assistance to assess your sales and use tax exposure and how the Wayfair decision may impact your business, please let us know. Any additional services will be covered under a separate engagement letter.

**Foreign Reporting:**

If you and/or your entity have a financial interest in, or signature authority over, any foreign accounts, you may be subject to certain filing requirements with the U.S. Department of the Treasury, in addition to the IRS. Filing requirements may also apply to taxpayers that have direct or indirect control over a foreign or domestic entity with foreign financial accounts, even if the taxpayer does not have foreign account(s). By your signature below, you agree to provide us with complete and accurate information regarding any foreign accounts that you and/or your entity may have had a direct or indirect interest in, or signature authority over, during the above referenced tax year. You also acknowledge your responsibility to meet any foreign country income tax or other foreign reporting requirements and related compliance. The foreign reporting requirements are very complex, so if you have any questions regarding the application of the U.S. Department of the Treasury and/or the IRS reporting requirements to your foreign interests or activities, please ask us for advice in that regard. Failure to disclose the required information to the U.S. Department



of the Treasury and the IRS may result in substantial civil and/or criminal penalties. We assume no liability for penalties associated with the failure to file or untimely filing of any of these forms.

**Electronic Filing:**

Taxing authorities require us to electronically file all federal and most state individual income tax returns (“e-filing”). However, you do have the right to “opt out” of the e-filing program. Please notify our firm immediately should you desire not to have your returns e-filed, so that we may provide you with the form(s) necessary for opting out of the e-file program. Please note that unless you notify us of your desire to not e-file your returns, we will prepare your returns to be e-filed.

Although e-filing requires both you and our firm to complete additional steps, the same filing deadlines will apply. You must therefore ensure that you complete the additional requirements well before the due dates in order for our firm to be able to timely transmit your returns. We will provide you with a digital or paper copy of the income tax returns for your review prior to electronic transmission. After you have reviewed the returns, you must provide us with a signed authorization indicating that you have reviewed the returns and that, to the best of your knowledge, you believe they are correct. We cannot transmit the returns to the taxing authorities until we have the signed authorization. Therefore, if you have not provided our firm with your signed authorization by April 10, 2021, we will place your returns on extension, even though they might already have been completed. In that event, you will be responsible for ensuring that any payment due with the extension is timely sent to the appropriate taxing authorities. You will also be responsible for any additional costs our firm incurs arising from the extension preparation.

By your signature below, you understand and agree that you are responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the records, documents, explanations, and other information provided to us for purposes of this engagement. You have the final responsibility for the income tax returns; therefore, you should review them carefully before you sign the e-file authorization forms, or sign and submit your income tax returns directly to the appropriate taxing authorities. You agree that our firm is not responsible for a taxing authority’s disallowance of deductions or inadequately supported documentation, nor for resulting taxes, penalties, and interest.

Finally, please note that although our firm will use our best efforts to ensure that your returns are successfully transmitted to the appropriate taxing authorities, we will not be financially responsible for electronic transmission or other errors arising after your returns have been successfully submitted from our office.

**Privacy Policy:**

We have updated our **Privacy Policy** for 2020-2021. This document is included with this letter (if mailed or emailed) and the text can be found online on our website.

Federal law has extended the attorney-client privilege to some, but not all, communications between a client and the client’s CPA. The privilege applies only to non-criminal tax matters that are before the IRS or brought by or against the U.S. Government in a federal court. The communications must be made in



connection with tax advice. Communications solely concerning the preparation of a tax return will not be privileged.

In addition, your confidentiality privilege can be inadvertently waived if you discuss the contents of any privileged communication with a third party, such as a lending institution, a friend, or a business associate. We recommend that you contact us before releasing any privileged information to a third party.

If we are asked to disclose any privileged communication, unless we are required to disclose the communication by law, we will not provide such disclosure until you have had an opportunity to argue that the communication is privileged. You agree to pay any and all reasonable expenses that we incur, including legal fees, that are a result of attempts to protect any communication as privileged.

In connection with this engagement, we may communicate with you or others via email transmission. We take reasonable measures to secure your confidential information in our email transmissions. However, as emails can be intercepted and read, disclosed, or otherwise used or communicated by an unintended third party, or may not be delivered to each of the parties to whom they are directed and only to such parties, we cannot guarantee or warrant that emails from us will be properly delivered to and read only by the addressee. Therefore, we specifically disclaim and waive any liability or responsibility whatsoever for interception or unintentional disclosure or communication of email transmissions, or for the unauthorized use or failed delivery of emails transmitted by us in connection with the performance of this engagement. In that regard, you agree that we shall have no liability for any loss or damage to any person or entity resulting from the use of email transmissions, including any consequential, incidental, direct, indirect, or special damages, such as loss of sales or anticipated profits, or disclosure or communication of confidential or proprietary information.

We may from time to time and depending on the circumstances and nature of the services we are providing, share your confidential information with third-party software service providers, some of whom may be cloud-based, but we remain committed to maintaining the confidentiality and security of your information. Accordingly, we maintain internal policies, procedures and safeguards to protect the confidentiality of your personal information. In addition, we will secure confidentiality terms with all service providers to maintain the confidentiality of your information and will take reasonable precautions to determine that they have appropriate procedures in place to prevent the unauthorized release of your confidential information to others. In the event that we are unable to secure appropriate confidentiality terms with a third-party service provider, you will be asked to provide your consent prior to the sharing of your confidential information with the third-party service provider. Although we will use our best efforts to make the sharing of your information with such third parties secure from unauthorized access, no completely secure system for electronic data transfer exists. As such, by your signature below, you understand that the firm makes no warranty, expressed or implied, on the security of electronic data transfers.

**Record Retention:**

It is our policy to keep records related to this engagement for 10 years. However, we do not keep any original client records, so we will return those to you at the completion of the services rendered under this engagement. It is your responsibility to retain and protect your records (which includes any work product we provide to you as well as any records that we return) for possible future use, including potential examination



by any government or regulatory agencies. Our firm does not accept responsibility for hosting client information; therefore, you have the sole responsibility for ensuring you retain and maintain in your possession all your financial and non-financial information, data and records.

By your signature below, you acknowledge and agree that upon the expiration of the 10-year period, we shall be free to destroy our records related to this engagement.

**Billing & Fees:**

Our updated **Billing & Fee Agreement** is enclosed with this engagement letter (if mailed or emailed) and can also be found on our website.

Fees for our services will be at our standard rates plus out-of-pocket expenses. Payment for service is due when rendered and interim billings may be submitted as work progresses and expenses are incurred. If we have not received payment within 30 days of our invoice, all work may be suspended until your account is brought current. Client acknowledges and agrees that in the event we stop work or withdraw from this engagement as a result of your failure to pay on a timely basis for services rendered as required by this engagement letter, we shall not be liable for any damages that occur as a result of our ceasing to render services.

We are responsible for preparing only the returns listed above. Our fee does not include responding to inquiries or examinations by taxing authorities. However, we are available to represent you. Our fees for such services are at our standard rates and would be covered under a separate engagement letter.

**Disputes:**

If any dispute arises among the parties hereto, the parties agree to first try in good faith to settle the dispute by mediation before resorting to litigation. Costs of any mediation proceeding shall be shared equally by all parties.

Client and accountant both agree that any dispute over fees charged by the accountant to the client will be submitted for resolution by arbitration in accordance with the applicable rules for resolving professional accounting and related services disputes, except that under all circumstances the arbitrator must follow the laws of Washington State. Such arbitration shall be binding and final. IN AGREEING TO ARBITRATION, WE BOTH ACKNOWLEDGE THAT, IN THE EVENT OF A DISPUTE OVER FEES CHARGED BY THE ACCOUNTANT, EACH OF US IS GIVING UP THE RIGHT TO HAVE THE DISPUTE DECIDED IN A COURT OF LAW BEFORE A JUDGE OR JURY AND INSTEAD WE ARE ACCEPTING THE USE OF ARBITRATION FOR RESOLUTION. The prevailing party shall be entitled to an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred in connection with the arbitration of the dispute in an amount to be determined by the arbitrator.



**Authorizations:**

If the above fairly sets forth your understanding, please sign the enclosed copy of this letter and return it to us or complete electronically via DocuSign. Please note that you are affirming to Ranta CPA & Associates your understanding of, and agreement to, the terms and conditions of this engagement letter by any one of the following actions: returning your signed engagement letter to our firm; providing your income tax information to us for use in the preparation of your returns; the submission of the tax returns we have prepared for you to the taxing authorities; or the payment of our return preparation fees.

We are pleased to have you as a client and look forward to a long and prosperous relationship.

Sincerely,

Tiffanie Ranta, CPA  
Ranta CPA & Associates LLC

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date