

Abstract: Many people might think about moving to another state. However, it's important to consider the tax ramifications before doing so. This article urges readers to identify all applicable taxes in a destination state and recommends being prepared to meet the legal requirements for establishing domicile.

Consider taxes before moving out of state

With so many people working remotely these days, it's become common to think about moving to another state — perhaps for better weather or to be closer to family. Many retirees also look at an across-the-border move to better control living expenses. If you've found yourself harboring such notions, be sure to consider taxes before packing up your things.

Identify applicable taxes

It may seem like a no-brainer to simply move to a state with no personal income tax, but you must consider **all** taxes that can potentially apply to state residents. In addition to income taxes, these may include property taxes, sales taxes, and estate or inheritance taxes.

If the states you're considering have an income tax, look at what types of income they tax. Some states, for example, don't tax wages but do tax interest and dividends. And some states offer tax breaks for pension payments, retirement plan distributions and Social Security payments.

Prepare for domicile

If you make a permanent move to a new state and want to escape taxes in the state you came from, it's important to establish legal domicile in the new location. Generally, your domicile is a fixed and permanent home location where you plan to return, even after periods of residing elsewhere.

Each state has its own rules regarding domicile. You don't want to wind up in a worst-case scenario: Two states could claim you owe state income taxes if you established domicile in the new state but didn't successfully terminate domicile in the old one. Additionally, if you die without clearly establishing domicile in just one state, both the old and new states may claim that your estate owes income taxes and any state estate tax.

The simplest and most obvious way to establish domicile is to buy or lease a home in the new state and sell your previous home (or rent it out at market rates to an unrelated party). Then change your mailing address on passports, insurance policies and other important documents. Getting a driver's license in the new state and registering your vehicle there also helps. Be sure to take these and other steps as soon as possible after moving.

Do the research

When looking into whether the grass is greener in another state, do some research and contact us. We can help you avoid unpleasant tax surprises.