



UNIQUE
FINANCIAL ADVISORS

YEAR-END TAX PLANNING GUIDE

Your 2026 Tax Plan Starts Now

A practical guide to tax-loss harvesting
and smarter year-end planning



April is for filing. **October is for planning.**

INVESTMENTS

TAX PLANNING

WEALTH BUILDING



YEAR-END TAX PLANNING

Your 2026 Tax Plan Starts Now

A practical guide to tax-loss harvesting and smarter year-end planning

April is for filing. October is for planning.

Why this guide matters now

- Review gains and losses while there is still time to act.
- Check withholding and estimated payments before a surprise becomes a bill.
- Evaluate retirement, Roth conversion, and charitable opportunities before year-end deadlines.
- Coordinate U.S. and overseas assets so your tax picture is not incomplete.

Octo





Filing taxes and planning taxes are not the same thing.

Tax preparation

Looks backward.
What happened last year?

Income, deductions, forms, reporting.

Tax planning

Looks forward.
What can we still change?

Timing, projections, scenarios, strategy.

A year-end review should ask:

- Has our income changed meaningfully this year?
- Did we sell investments, property, or receive equity compensation?
- Do we have large unrealized gains or losses?
- Are we using the right tax-advantaged accounts?
- Do we have foreign income, accounts, property, or inheritance to consider?

A tax return reports the score. A tax strategy asks whether you can still change the game.

ADD THIS TO YOUR YEAR-END REVIEW

Do we have unused capital-loss carryforwards from 2025 or earlier?

Check the prior-year Schedule D and capital-loss carryover worksheet. Existing losses can change what additional harvesting may accomplish.

[See how UFA approaches tax planning](#)



A losing investment may still have a job to do.

Tax-loss harvesting means intentionally realizing certain investment losses so those losses may offset capital gains elsewhere in a taxable portfolio.

GAIN

+\$12,000

Realized capital gain

LOSS

-\$7,000

Harvested capital loss

NET

+\$5,000

Net capital gain

Three things to remember

- Losses generally offset capital gains first.
- If losses exceed gains, individuals may generally use up to \$3,000 of net capital loss against other income, with unused losses potentially carried forward.
- Tax-loss harvesting generally belongs in taxable brokerage accounts, not tax-deferred retirement accounts.

The goal is not simply to sell something that is down. The goal is to make the portfolio and tax plan work together.

AN ADVISOR PERSPECTIVE: FEATURED IN CNN BUSINESS

In a 2018 CNN Business article, Vid Ponnappalli described coordinating investment rebalancing with tax-loss harvesting - realizing losses in some holdings to help offset gains in others.

[Read Vid's CNN Business commentary \(2018\) >](#)

[Read UFA: Tax Loss Harvesting to Help Minimize Taxes](#)





One 30-day mistake can undo the strategy.

Selling at a loss and immediately buying back the same - or a substantially identical - security can prevent the loss from being currently deductible.



Watch for purchases you may not notice

- Automatic dividend reinvestment or recurring purchases
- The same security held across multiple accounts
- Purchases in an IRA or Roth IRA
- A spouse purchasing the same investment
- Buying back substantially identical exposure too quickly

Before harvesting a loss, look at the entire household portfolio - not just one account.



Do not let the tax tail wag the investment dog.

A tax benefit does not automatically make something a good investment decision. Before selling simply because a position is down, make sure the move still supports the portfolio.

Ask these six questions first

- Do we still believe in the investment?
- Does selling improve diversification or risk?
- What gains have we already realized?
- Do we already have loss carryforwards?
- What will replace the investment?
- Could the sale distort our asset allocation?

Best case: tax-loss harvesting can strengthen your portfolio strategy while improving tax efficiency.

MUTUAL FUND TAX PITFALLS

A fund may pass capital-gain distributions to shareholders, even if they did not sell their own fund shares. Taxable-account investors should check estimated year-end distributions.

Also review total costs and whether an ETF alternative fits your plan; tax efficiency depends on the specific fund and account.

[Read UFA: Three Dangerous Pitfalls of Mutual Fund Investing >](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

A mutual fund can distribute taxable capital gains even when you did not personally sell your shares.

You cannot plan around income you have not projected.

By October, you usually know much more about your year than you did in January. Use that information before December 31.

● Bonus / commission

● RSUs / stock options

● Investment gains

● Business income

● Property sale

● Career change

● Retirement distribution

● Roth conversion

● Foreign income

Then compare your expected 2026 tax liability with withholding and estimated payments. A surprise in October can still be planned for. A surprise discovered in April is usually just a bill.





Before year-end, review the accounts you already have.

For many households, tax-advantaged accounts are one of the most practical year-end planning levers. Contribution limits, eligibility, and plan rules still matter.

401(k) / 403(b) / 457

\$24,500

2026 employee contribution limit

Traditional + Roth IRA

\$7,500

2026 combined IRA limit

HSA

\$4,400 / \$8,750

Self-only / family coverage

Could this be a Roth-conversion year?

- A lower-income year or retirement transition can create a planning window.
- A conversion creates taxable income in the year of conversion.
- The right amount - if any - should be modeled within the full tax picture.

Do not max accounts just because you can. Use them intentionally within the full plan.

FROM UFA'S BLOG

[What to know about ROTH conversions >](#)



If you already plan to give, how you give can matter.

Year-end charitable planning is not about giving for the deduction. It is about coordinating generosity with the rest of your tax and investment plan.

APPRECIATED ASSETS

Could donating appreciated securities avoid a sale first?

TIMING

Would bunching gifts into one year fit the broader plan?

ACCOUNT CHOICE

Could a donor-advised fund or eligible IRA strategy be worth evaluating?

2026 note: eligible non-itemizers may generally deduct up to \$1,000 of qualifying cash charitable contributions, or \$2,000 for married couples filing jointly, subject to the rules.

Give because the cause matters. Then coordinate the gift intelligently with the rest of your financial plan.

FROM UFA'S BLOG

[Your Holiday Wellness Plan: Giving and Taxes >](#)



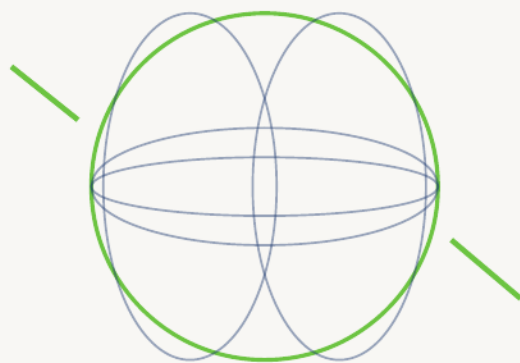
Your U.S. tax review should not stop at the U.S. border.

If you live in the U.S. but have financial ties overseas, include them in the year-end conversation before a sale, transfer, gift, or inheritance becomes urgent.

- Foreign bank accounts
- Overseas investments
- Rental property abroad
- Foreign business income
- Property you may sell
- Gifts or inheritance from family overseas

Ask before money moves

- What is the source of the money?
- Was tax already paid overseas?
- What documentation do we have?
- Could U.S. reporting apply?
- Is a sale, transfer, or inheritance coming next year?



Your wealth may cross borders. Your tax planning should too.

[Download the Overseas Wealth Guide](#)



Want help doing this right?

Tax planning should happen before tax season.

At Unique Financial Advisors, we help families connect tax decisions with the rest of their financial lives - investments, retirement, cash flow, estate planning, and overseas wealth.

- Year-end tax projections
- Investment gains and losses
- Retirement contributions
- Roth-conversion decisions
- Charitable planning
- Equity compensation
- Business and investment income
- Overseas wealth

The better question is not only:

“How do I pay less tax this year?”

It is: How do we make smarter tax decisions across the entire financial plan?

[Book a Discovery Call](#)

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