Landlord's Desk

Landlord year-end checklist, tax year 2026

What to gather before December 31, which 1099s go out in January, and what your tax preparer will ask for. Tick each box as you go.

Before December 31, 2026

- [ ] **Gather your receipts.**
  Repairs, supplies, insurance, property tax bills, utilities you pay and anything you bought for the rental. Keep one folder for each property.

- [ ] **Match rent received to your ledger, unit by unit.**
  Add up what each tenant paid this year and compare it with your ledger and your bank deposits. Note late, partial or missing months now, while you remember why.

- [ ] **Separate repairs from improvements.**
  A repair keeps the place working, like fixing a lock or patching a leak. An improvement makes the property better, restores it or adapts it to a new use, like a new roof or furnace. Improvements are depreciated over years, so mark which is which.

- [ ] **Finish your mileage log.**
  Write the date, where you drove and why for each rental trip. 2026 has two IRS rates: 72.5 cents a mile for January 1 to June 30 and 76 cents for July 1 to December 31, so keep two totals. Keep parking and toll receipts too. Trips between your home and the rental are usually commuting.

- [ ] **Collect a W-9 from every contractor you paid.**
  Plumbers, electricians, cleaners, painters, handymen. You need the legal name, address and taxpayer ID to prepare a 1099. Asking now is easier than asking in late January.

- [ ] **Add up what you paid each contractor in 2026.**
  For payments made in 2026 the 1099 threshold is $2,000 or more per person, up from $600. Note how you paid: payments by credit card, debit card or a third-party payment network are reported by the payment company on Form 1099-K, not on your 1099s.

- [ ] **Note anything you bought, improved or sold.**
  A building, a roof, an appliance. Find the closing statement or invoice and the date the item was ready to rent.

- [ ] **Chicago landlords: check security deposit interest.**
  Where Chicago's RLTO covers the unit, interest is owed on deposits held more than six months, paid within 30 days after the end of each 12-month rental period, in cash or as a credit against rent. The 2026 rate is 0.01%. The date follows each lease year, not December 31. Owner-occupied buildings with six or fewer units are not covered.

January 2027

- [ ] **Decide who gets a 1099.**
  In general, a 1099-NEC goes to anyone who is not your employee and was paid $2,000 or more for services in 2026. Rent and other payments of $2,000 or more go on a 1099-MISC. These rules apply to payments made in the course of a trade or business, and the IRS doesn't say whether an ordinary small rental is one, so ask your tax preparer.

- [ ] **Leave out most corporations, but not lawyers.**
  Payments to corporations generally need no 1099. Payments for legal services do, even when the law firm is a corporation.

- [ ] **Send each 1099-NEC to the contractor and to the IRS by Monday, February 1, 2027.**
  The usual date is January 31, which is a Sunday in 2027, so the next business day counts.

- [ ] **Send 1099-MISC copies to recipients by Monday, February 1, 2027.**
  File them with the IRS by Monday, March 1, 2027 on paper, or by Wednesday, March 31, 2027 if you file electronically.

- [ ] **Count your forms.**
  If you file 10 or more information returns in total for the year, counting every type together, you must file them electronically.

- [ ] **Watch for Form 1098.**
  If you paid $600 or more in mortgage interest in 2026, your lender should send Form 1098 by February 1, 2027.

- [ ] **Add property tax bills and insurance statements to each property's folder.**
  You will want the bills and proof of what you paid in 2026.

For your tax preparer

- [ ] **Rent received and expenses for each property, kept separate.**
  Bring your unit-by-unit ledger too, in case they ask.

- [ ] **Expenses sorted by Schedule E line.**
  Advertising, auto and travel, cleaning and maintenance, insurance, legal and professional fees, management fees, mortgage interest, repairs, supplies, taxes, utilities and other.

- [ ] **Depreciation records.**
  Last year's depreciation schedule, plus closing statements and invoices for anything you bought or improved in 2026.

- [ ] **Form 1098 for each mortgage.**
  If you paid interest to someone who is not a bank, or you received no Form 1098, tell your preparer.

- [ ] **Property tax bills and insurance statements.**
  One set for each property, with proof of what you paid in 2026.

- [ ] **Your mileage log, with the two 2026 totals.**
  Miles for January 1 to June 30 and miles for July 1 to December 31.

- [ ] **Copies of the 1099s you sent, and the W-9s behind them.**
  Schedule E asks whether you made payments that required a 1099 and whether you filed them.

- [ ] **Chicago landlords: a note of deposit interest you paid or credited to tenants.**

Dates to know in 2027

Monday, February 1, 2027	1099-NEC to contractors and the IRS; 1099-MISC to recipients
Monday, March 1, 2027	1099-MISC to the IRS on paper
Wednesday, March 31, 2027	1099-MISC to the IRS by e-file
Thursday, April 15, 2027	2026 Form 1040 with Schedule E, or Form 4868 for a six-month extension to file

Schedule E lines, one sheet for each property

Line names follow the IRS draft of the 2026 Schedule E (Form 1040), Part I. Recheck them against the final form before you file.

Property: _____

Line	Name on the form	Your total
3	Rents received	
5	Advertising	
6	Auto and travel	
7	Cleaning and maintenance	
8	Commissions	
9	Insurance	
10	Legal and other professional fees	
11	Management fees	
12	Mortgage interest paid to banks, etc.	
13a	Vehicle loan interest (new for 2026, IRS draft)	
13b	Other interest	
14	Repairs	
15	Supplies	
16	Taxes	
17	Utilities	
18	Depreciation expense or depletion	
19	Other (list)	

Want next year's numbers ready without the scramble? Landlord's Desk keeps rent and expenses by property all year, then builds a Schedule E summary and a tax pack for your accountant. Start free at landlordsdesk.com. No credit card needed to start.

General information, not tax advice. Tax rules change and your situation may differ. Check with your tax preparer. Rules read on irs.gov and chicago.gov, November 23, 2026. The 2026 Schedule E was still an IRS draft on that date.