

Year-End Close Checklist 2026

A practical list for US small business owners to get the books clean, reconciled and ready for your CPA before January.

☐ Tick each item as you finish it. Work top to bottom: cash first, hand-off last.

1 Cash and bank

- ☐ Reconcile every bank, credit card, PayPal, Stripe and Square account through **December 31**
- ☐ Clear all uncategorized and "Ask My Accountant" transactions
- ☐ Review Undeposited Funds and match every deposit to its invoices
- ☐ Follow up on checks outstanding for more than 90 days
- ☐ Record transfers between your own accounts as transfers, not income or expense

3 Bills and payables

- ☐ Enter every bill for goods or services received in 2026
- ☐ List expenses incurred but not yet billed, so they land in the right year
- ☐ Compare key vendor balances with their statements
- ☐ Cancel recurring subscriptions you no longer use

2 Sales and receivables

- ☐ Review the open invoice list and send final reminders
- ☐ Flag invoices unlikely to be collected and discuss them with your CPA
- ☐ Keep customer deposits and prepayments as liabilities until the work is delivered
- ☐ Check that sales tax collected in the books matches what was filed

4 Payroll and contractors

- ☐ Have a **W-9** on file for every contractor before January payments
- ☐ Total 2026 payments per contractor. For payments made in 2026, the 1099-NEC threshold is generally **\$2,000** (up from \$600)
- ☐ Reconcile payroll reports to the books: wages, taxes and benefits
- ☐ S-corp owners: confirm owner salary and health insurance are on payroll before the final 2026 run

General guidance only, not tax or legal advice. Thresholds, deadlines and rules can change and depend on your situation; confirm with your CPA.

5 Assets, loans and equity

- ☐ Record equipment and vehicle purchases and keep the invoices
- ☐ Split loan payments into principal and interest, and match balances to lender statements
- ☐ Count inventory at year-end and adjust the books to the count
- ☐ Record owner contributions and draws or distributions in equity, not as expenses

6 Review and hand-off

- ☐ Run the P&L and balance sheet; compare with last year and explain big swings
- ☐ Confirm estimated tax payments made in 2026 are recorded
- ☐ Gather mileage logs, home office details and receipts for large purchases
- ☐ Send your CPA one package: reports, statements, the 1099 list and loan statements
- ☐ Set a closing date in your software so 2026 can't be changed by accident

Key federal dates for the 2026 tax year (calendar-year businesses)

Jan 15, 2027	Fourth-quarter 2026 estimated tax payment
Feb 1, 2027	W-2s and 1099-NECs due to recipients and to the IRS/SSA (Jan 31 falls on a Sunday)
Mar 15, 2027	S-corporation (Form 1120-S) and partnership (Form 1065) returns or extensions
Apr 15, 2027	Individual (Form 1040) and C-corporation (Form 1120) returns or extensions

State deadlines vary. Your CPA will confirm the dates that apply to you.

Notes for your CPA



Want the books closed for you?

JV Intelli Advisors handles monthly close, reconciliations, catch-up and year-end cleanup for US small businesses and CPA firms, in QuickBooks Online and Xero. Book a free discovery call at jvintelliadvisors.com.

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