

IRS Warns of High Volume on Toll-Free Customer Service Phones

The IRS reminded taxpayers the Presidents Day holiday period typically marks one of the busiest weeks of the tax filing season for its phone lines. There are other alternatives to help taxpayers find answers to commonly asked tax questions.

The Internal Revenue Service has several easy-to-use, online tools on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov). Taxpayers can check the status of their refund, request a copy of their tax transcript or get an answer to their tax questions around the clock.

“The entire week of the Presidents Day holiday marks a peak time in the number of calls to the IRS, and we encourage taxpayers to visit [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) as the best place to get quick help and answers to your questions,” said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen.

To save time and find answers faster, taxpayers should make [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) their first stop. A good place to start is the [IRS Services Guide](#) for a quick overview of online services and resources. IRS information and some tools also are in [Spanish](#).

Here are some of the most common reasons people call us over Presidents Day holiday week and the faster and easier ways to get answers:

Want to know where your refund is?

More than 90 percent of refunds are issued in less than 21 days. IRS representatives will not provide individual refund information before then. Taxpayers can easily find information about their refund by using the [Where's My Refund?](#) tool. It's available on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) and on the Smartphone app, IRS2Go. Where's My Refund? provides taxpayers with the most up-to-date information available. Taxpayers must have information from their current, pending tax return to access their refund information. Refund information is updated just once a day, generally overnight, so there's no need to check more than once a day.

Didn't get a W-2?

Employers are required to send to their employees a Form W-2, Statement of Earnings, by January 31. Employees should allow enough time for their form to be mailed to their address of record. If form W-2 is not received by the end of February, employees should first contact their employer to ensure they have the correct address on file.

After exhausting all options with the employer, employees may contact the IRS and we will send a letter to the employer. However, we would urge you to wait until the end of February to avoid long wait times on the telephone.

Need a copy of your tax return or transcript?

Taxpayers can easily order a return or transcript on the IRS.gov website, or by mailing us a completed Form 4506-T. See our [Get Transcript](#) application to immediately view, print or download your transcript. More information on these options is available at IRS.gov.

Ordering a tax return or tax transcript does not mean a taxpayer will get their refund faster. The two are not connected in any way. IRS transcripts are often used to validate income and tax filing status for mortgage, student and small business loan applications and to help with tax preparation.

Wondering how the Affordable Care Act will affect you?

This year almost all taxpayers must do something related to new health care reporting requirements. The majority of taxpayers - more than three out of four – will simply need to check a box to verify they have health insurance coverage. For the minority of taxpayers who will have to do more, [IRS.gov/aca](https://www.irs.gov/aca) features useful information and tips regarding the premium tax credit, the individual shared responsibility requirement and other tax features of the ACA. [Publication 5201](#), The Health Care Law and Your Taxes, also provides a snapshot of ACA requirements.

Need answers to tax law questions?

Questions about what filing status means, whether to file a tax return or who can be claimed as a dependent? There's the [Interactive Tax Assistant](#) that takes you through a series of questions just like one of our customer service representatives would. You can also do a keyword search on IRS.gov; use [Publication 17](#), the annual, searchable income tax guide; or the [IRS Tax Map](#), which allows search by topic or keyword for single-point access to tax law information by subject. Taxpayers can even call TeleTax at 1-800-829-4477 for recorded information on a variety of general and business tax topics.

Can't pay a tax bill?

For taxpayers whose concern isn't a refund, but rather, a tax bill they can't pay, the [Online Payment Agreement tool](#) can help them determine in a matter of minutes whether they qualify for an installment agreement with the IRS. And for those whose tax obligation is even more serious, the Offer in Compromise Pre-Qualifier can help them determine if they qualify for an offer in compromise, an agreement with the IRS that settles their tax liability for less than the full amount owed.

Need help preparing your taxes?

Free tax return preparation help is available nationwide from volunteers and on IRS.gov with [Free File](#). Local community partners operate roughly 13,000 [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance](#) (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) sites nationwide. Find a location nearby by searching "Free Tax Help" on IRS.gov.

IRS [Free File](#) is offered by 14 tax software companies that make their brand-name products available for free to the 70 percent of taxpayers who earned \$60,000 or less last year. Free File Fillable Forms is available for households whose earnings are more than \$60,000 and are comfortable preparing their taxes.

Taxpayers may also use our searchable directory on IRS.gov for help on [finding a tax professional](#) with credentials and select qualifications to help them prepare their tax returns.