



News Release

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IRS Issues “Fast Track” Guidance to Help Taxpayers

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WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service issued guidance today to make permanent two programs that allow taxpayers and the IRS to reach agreement on tax disputes more quickly. The IRS also announced a pilot program to expedite the resolution of Tax Exempt Bond disputes.

In guidance issued today, the IRS:

- Makes permanent the Fast Track Mediation program. This program gives small businesses, self-employed taxpayers and the IRS the opportunity to mediate disputes through an IRS appeals officer, who acts as a neutral party. In this program, most tax disputes are resolved within 40 days compared to several months through the regular appeal process. Since June 2002, more than 200 cases have been mediated – with 100 percent resolution in more than half of those cases.
- Makes permanent the Fast Track Settlement program. The program enables the IRS to resolve tax disputes with large and mid-size businesses at an earlier stage – often within a much shorter time than through the normal audit and appeal processes. The Fast Track Settlement pilot program became available for large and mid-size businesses on November 14, 2001, with the goal of reaching settlement with taxpayers within 120 days. By May 31, 2003, IRS and 104 large and mid-size business taxpayers had successfully settled through the pilot program, in an average time of 69 days, just over half of the expected time.
- Creates the pilot Fast Track Mediation program for Tax Exempt Bonds. This will allow the IRS and issuers of tax exempt bonds to expedite the resolution of cases more quickly than through the standard appeals process.

The IRS guidance issued today on these fast track programs is available on www.irs.gov and will be published in Internal Revenue Bulletin 2003-25, dated June 23, 2003.

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