

IRS News Release

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The National Taxpayer Advocate Wants to Hear from You: Olson to Hold Public Forum on Taxpayer Service Needs in Portland, Ore., on Aug. 18

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WASHINGTON — National Taxpayer Advocate Nina E. Olson will hold a public forum in Portland, Ore., on Thursday, Aug. 18, to discuss what taxpayers want and need from the IRS to comply with their tax obligations. The forum is being held in Portland at the invitation of Sen. Ron Wyden, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Finance.

The public forum will take place at the Hollywood Senior Center at 5:30 p.m. local time. Members of the public and the media are invited to attend.

Building on initiatives already implemented, the IRS for the past two years has been developing a “Future State” plan that envisions how it will operate in five years and beyond. It is continuing to develop a path for how it gets from its “Current State” to the “Future State,” including refinements to the vision along the way. A central component of the plan is the creation of online taxpayer accounts as a convenient but non-exclusive channel through which taxpayers will be able to obtain information from and interact with the IRS.

In the National Taxpayer Advocate’s [2015 Annual Report to Congress](#), Olson expressed concerns about whether the IRS’s “Future State” plan adequately addresses taxpayer needs. She recommended the IRS solicit comments from taxpayers and tax professionals regarding the “Future State” plan, including their thoughts on the extent to which taxpayers will continue to need telephone and in-person assistance. To further public awareness and dialogue, she announced plans to hold a series of public forums around the country. The objective of the public forums is to ensure the “Future State” plan will better reflect the needs and preferences of U.S. taxpayers as they seek to comply with the tax code.

In the National Taxpayer Advocate’s [FY 2017 Objectives Report to Congress](#), . Olson highlighted notable observations and suggestions shared by panelists at public forums held earlier this year. She wrote: “Although the National Taxpayer Advocate has been charged by Congress to be the voice of the taxpayer inside the IRS, what we heard at the Public Forums around the country were the voices of real taxpayers and their real

representatives. They are compelling, articulate, and clear about what they need in order to comply with the tax laws."

The Aug. 18 public forum will feature an invited panel of representatives from the small business and local taxpayer communities, including the following:

Sarah Adams, Executive Director
CASH Oregon | Portland, Ore.

Susan Gallagher-Smith, Enrolled Agent, Board Chair
Oregon Board of Tax Practitioners | Eugene, Ore.

Michael L. Such, Research Assistant, Lewis & Clark Low Income Taxpayer Clinic
Lewis & Clark Law School | Portland, Ore.

Ilene Waterman, VITA volunteer
Native American Youth and Family Center | Portland, Ore.

Members of the public will also have an opportunity to speak.

Local Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS) staff will be available to talk with attendees about unresolved tax issues and help determine if their situation qualifies for TAS assistance. TAS generally is unable to assist taxpayers with return preparation questions, but can provide assistance to taxpayers who have already filed their returns with the IRS for the current or past years and are experiencing problems that meet its case-acceptance criteria.

The public forum will take place at 5:30 p.m. at the Hollywood Senior Center, 1820 NE 40th Avenue, Portland, OR 97212.

For information about the forum, go to TaxpayerAdvocate.irs.gov/public-forums.

About the Taxpayer Advocate Service

The Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS) is an *independent* organization within the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that helps taxpayers and protects taxpayer rights. Your local advocate's number is in your local directory and at taxpayeradvocate.irs.gov. You can also call TAS toll-free at 1-877-777-4778. TAS can help if you need assistance resolving an IRS problem, if your problem is causing financial difficulty, or if you believe an IRS system or procedure isn't working as it should. And our service is free. For more information about TAS and your rights under the Taxpayer Bill of Rights, go to taxpayeradvocate.irs.gov. You can get updates on tax topics at facebook.com/YourVoiceAtIRS, Twitter.com/YourVoiceatIRS, and YouTube.com/TASNTA.