

# IRS News Release

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## 2017 Tax Filing Season Opens Today

### IRS YouTube Videos

*When Will I Get My Refund:* [English](#) | [Spanish](#)*Claiming EITC or ACTC? Your refund may be delayed:* [English](#)*Welcome to Free File:* [English](#)*Security Summit Identity Theft Tips Overview –* [English](#)

IR-2017-06, Jan. 23, 2017

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service said today that it successfully started accepting and processing 2016 federal individual income tax returns on schedule. More than 153 million returns are expected to be filed this year.

People have until Tuesday, April 18, 2017 to file their 2016 returns and pay any taxes due. The deadline is later this year due to several factors. The usual April 15 deadline falls on Saturday this year, which would normally give taxpayers until at least the following Monday. However, Emancipation Day, a D.C. holiday, is observed on Monday, April 17, giving taxpayers nationwide an additional day to file. By law, D.C. holidays impact tax deadlines for everyone in the same way federal holidays do. Taxpayers requesting an extension will have until Monday, Oct. 16, 2017 to file.

"Following months of hard work, we successfully opened our processing systems today to start this year's tax season," said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. "Getting to this point is a year-round effort for the IRS and the nation's tax community. The dedicated employees of the IRS look forward to serving taxpayers this filing season, and I want to thank all of the tax and payroll community for their hard work that makes tax time smoother for the nation."

The IRS expects more than 70 percent of taxpayers to get tax refunds this year. Last year, 111 million refunds were issued, with an average refund of \$2,860.

### Refund Delays

A law change now requires the IRS to hold refunds on tax returns claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) or Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC) until Feb. 15. Under this change required by the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act, the IRS must hold the entire refund — even the portion not associated with the EITC and ACTC. Even though the IRS will begin releasing EITC and ACTC refunds on Feb. 15, many early filers will still not have actual access to their refunds until the week of Feb. 27. The additional delay is due to several factors, including weekends, the Presidents Day holiday and the time banks often need to process direct deposits.

This law change gives the IRS more time to detect and prevent fraud. Beyond the EITC and ACTC refunds and the additional security safeguards, the IRS anticipates issuing more than nine out of 10 refunds in less than 21 days. However, it's possible a particular return may require additional

review and take longer. Taxpayers are reminded that state tax agencies have their own refund processing timeframes that vary, and some states may make additional reviews to ensure their refunds are being issued properly. Even so, taxpayers should file as usual, and tax return preparers should submit returns as they normally do.

### **Use e-File and Free File**

The IRS expects more than 80 percent of returns to be filed electronically. Choosing [e-file](#) and [direct deposit](#) remains the fastest and safest way to file an accurate income tax return and receive a refund.

The IRS **Free File program**, available at IRS.gov, gives eligible taxpayers a dozen options for brand-name products. Free File is a partnership with commercial partners offering free brand-name software to about 100 million individuals and families with incomes of \$64,000 or less. Seventy percent of the nation's taxpayers are eligible for IRS Free File. People who earned more than \$64,000 may use Free File Fillable Forms, the electronic version of IRS paper forms.

### **Protecting Taxpayers from Identity Theft-Related Refund Fraud**

The IRS continues to work with state tax authorities and the tax industry to address tax-related identity theft and refund fraud. As part of the [Security Summit](#) effort, stronger protections for taxpayers and the nation's tax system are in effect for the 2017 tax filing season.

The new measures attack tax-related identity theft from multiple sides. Many changes will be invisible to taxpayers but will help the IRS, states and the tax industry provide new protections. New security requirements will better protect tax software accounts and personal information.

### **Renew ITIN to Avoid Refund Delays**

Many Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs) expired on Jan. 1, 2017. This includes any ITIN not used on a tax return at least once in the past three years. Also now expired is any ITIN with middle digits of either 78 or 79 (Example: 9NN-78-NNNN or 9NN-79-NNNN). Affected taxpayers should act soon to avoid refund delays and possible loss of eligibility for some key tax benefits until the ITIN is renewed. An ITIN is used by anyone who has tax-filing or payment obligations under U.S. tax law but is not eligible for a Social Security number.

It can take up to 11 weeks to process a complete and accurate ITIN renewal application. For that reason, the IRS urges anyone with an expired ITIN needing to file a return this tax season to submit their ITIN renewal application soon.

### **New AGI requirement for e-file**

All taxpayers should keep a copy of their tax return. Beginning in 2017, taxpayers using a tax filing software product for the first time may need their Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) amount from their prior-year tax return to verify their identity. Taxpayers can learn more about how to verify their identity and electronically sign tax returns at [Validating Your Electronically Filed Tax Return](#).

### **Free Tax Help**

Low- and moderate-income taxpayers can get help filing their tax return for free. More than 90,000 volunteers around the country can help people correctly complete their return.

To get this filing help, taxpayers can visit one of the more than 12,000 community-based tax help sites that participate in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and Tax Counseling for the Elderly

programs. To find the nearest site, use the [VITA/TCE Site Locator](#) on IRS.gov or the IRS2Go mobile app.

### **Filing Assistance**

The IRS reminds taxpayers that a trusted tax professional can provide helpful information about the tax laws. A number of [tips about selecting a preparer](#) and information about [national tax professional groups](#) are available on IRS.gov.

The IRS urges all taxpayers to make sure they have all their year-end statements in hand before filing. This includes Forms W-2 from employers and Forms 1099 from banks and other payers. Doing so will help avoid refund delays and the need to file an amended return.

### **Online tools**

Many tax issues can now be resolved online or by phone from the convenience of a home or office. The IRS urges taxpayers to take advantage of the many tools and other resources available on IRS.gov. IRS phone lines will be busy again this year, so in order to save time, people should first visit the IRS website for tax assistance.