

IRS News Release

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Avoid the Rush; Use IRS.gov for Quick Answers to Questions

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WASHINGTON – The Internal Revenue Service today reminded taxpayers that the next couple of weeks, especially around Presidents' Day, marks the busiest time of year for IRS toll-free phone services. Taxpayers can avoid the rush by getting answers to their questions on IRS.gov.

The IRS will be issuing an "Avoid the Rush" series of news releases that provide tips related to the most common questions asked by taxpayers during the February peak.

The IRS will staff its toll-free telephone service Saturday, Feb. 18, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., callers' local time, and Monday, Feb. 20, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., callers' local time.

To save time and find answers faster, taxpayers should make 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 are also in [Spanish](#).

Here are some reasons people call the IRS as well as faster and easier ways to get answers on IRS.gov:

Where's My Refund?

The IRS issues more than 90 percent of refunds in less than 21 days. IRS representatives cannot 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 and on the mobile app, [IRS2Go](#). "Where's My Refund?" provides taxpayers with the most up-to-date information available.

"Where's My Refund?" Begins Updating Feb. 16 for EITC and ACTC Filers

By law, the IRS must hold Earned Income Tax Credit or the Additional Child Tax Credit refunds until Feb. 15. Taxpayers will begin to see refunds claiming EITC/ACTC the week of Feb. 27. "Where's My Refund?" will update for EITC/ACTC refunds beginning Feb. 16, with the vast majority updating by Feb. 18.

Do IRS Phone Assistors or Transcripts Have More Up-to-Date Refund Information?

The IRS phone assistors do not have additional information on refund dates beyond what taxpayers have access to on "Where's My Refund?". Given high call volumes, taxpayers should not call unless directed to do so by the refund tool. In addition, a common myth is that people can get their refund date earlier by ordering a tax transcript. There is no such "secret" option to find a refund date by calling the IRS or ordering a transcript; just check "Where's My Refund?" once a day.

Need to Visit a Local IRS Office?

Most taxpayers must [make an appointment](#) before visiting a Taxpayer Assistance Center. However, this time of year also is a peak time for TAC visits. The vast majority of people seeking an appointment can find answers to their questions on IRS.gov.

Need Answers to Tax Law Questions?

Taxpayers with questions about what filing status means, whether to file a tax return or who can be claimed as a dependent can use online tools. There's the [Interactive Tax Assistant](#) that takes taxpayers through a series of questions just like a customer service representatives would. Taxpayers may also do a keyword search on IRS.gov; use [Publication 17](#), the annual, searchable income tax guide; or the [IRS Tax Map](#), which allows users to search by topic or keyword to find tax-law information by subject.

How Do I Find 2015 Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)?

If taxpayers changed tax software products this year, they may need to manually enter their 2015 adjusted gross income to complete the electronic filing process. On a 2015 tax return, the AGI is on line 37 of the Form 1040; line 21 on the Form 1040-A or line 4 on the Form 1040-EZ. See [Validating Your Electronically Filed Tax Return](#) for options for taxpayers who did not retain a copy of their 2015 return.

Didn't Get a Form W-2?

Employers are required to send their employees a Form W-2, Statement of Earnings, by Jan. 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 mailing address on file. After exhausting all options with the employer, employees may contact the IRS. The IRS will send a letter to the employer. However, the IRS urges taxpayers to wait until after Feb. 27 to avoid long wait times on the telephone.

Need a Copy of a Tax Return or Transcript?

Taxpayers can easily order a return or transcript on the IRS.gov website. See the [Get Transcript](#) tool to download a transcript or have a transcript mailed. More information on these options is available at IRS.gov.

Can't Pay a Tax Bill?

For taxpayers whose concern is a tax bill they can't pay, the [Online Payment Agreement tool](#) can help determine whether they qualify for an installment agreement with the IRS.

Need Help Preparing Your Taxes?

Free tax return preparation is available nationwide from volunteers and on IRS.gov with [Free File](#). Local community partners operate about 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 12 tax software companies that make their brand-name products available for free to the 70 percent of taxpayers who earned \$64,000 or less last year. Free File Fillable Forms is available for those whose earnings are more than \$64,000 and are comfortable

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