Congressional Update

News for members of Congress and their staffs – August 2021

The Child Tax Credit Update Portal allows families to update direct deposit information or unenroll

The IRS recently upgraded the Child Tax Credit Update Portal to enable families to update their bank account information so they can receive their monthly Child Tax Credit payment. The tool also allows families to unenroll from the advance payments if they don't want to receive them.

The update portal is available only on IRS.gov.

Any updates made by August 2 will apply to the August 13 payment and all subsequent monthly payments for the rest of 2021. Most families received their July 15 payment by direct deposit in the bank account currently on file with the IRS.

People without current bank account information can use the online tool to update their information so they can get the payments sooner by direct deposit. Those who are not enrolled for direct deposit will receive a check.

How to update direct deposit information

First, families should use the Child Tax Credit Update Portal to confirm their eligibility for payments. If eligible, the tool will also indicate whether they are enrolled to receive their payments by direct deposit.

If so, it will list the full bank routing number and the last four digits of their account number. This is the account that will receive their July 15 payment.

If they choose, they can change the bank account receiving the payment starting with the August 13 payment.

If the update portal shows a family is eligible to receive payments but not enrolled to receive them by direct deposit, they will receive a mailed check each month. If they want to receive their payments by direct deposit, they can use the update portal to add their bank account information. Couples who are married and file jointly must both update their bank account information the same day to the same account to continue getting joint payments.

Any family receiving checks should consider switching to direct deposit to access their money quicker. Direct deposit removes the time, worry and expense of cashing a check, and eliminates the chance of a lost, stolen or undelivered check. People who don't have a bank account can visit the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) website for details on opening an account online or use the FDIC's BankFind tool to locate an FDIC-insured bank. BankOn, American Bankers Association, Independent Community Bankers of America, and the National Credit Union Administration have lists of banks and credit unions that can open an account online.

Families can stop payments anytime

Even after payments begin, families can stop all future monthly payments by using the unenroll feature in the Child Tax Credit Update Portal. Eligible families who make this choice will still receive the rest of their child tax credit as a lump sum when they file their 2021 federal income tax return next year. **To stop all payments starting in August and the rest of 2021, they must unenroll by August 2, 2021.**

Who should unenroll?

Some families may prefer to receive the entire credit as a refund when they file their 2021 return. The portal's unenroll feature can also be helpful to any family that no longer qualifies for the child tax credit or believes they will not qualify when they file their 2021 return. Married filing joint taxpayers both need to unenroll. If one spouse does not unenroll, they will get half of the joint payment they were supposed to receive with their spouse.

For more information about the unenrollment process, including deadlines, see Topic J of the Child Tax Credit FAQs on IRS.gov.

The IRS will add more features to the Child Tax Credit Update Portal through the summer and fall. Soon people will be able to update their mailing address. By fall, people will be able to use the tool to update changes to family status and income. More information is on the Advance Child Tax Credit Payments in 2021 page of IRS.gov.

*Date You Can Make Changes	What You Can Do
June 21	• Find out if you're eligible • Unenroll from payments • See a list of your payments
June 30	• Make changes to your bank information for your payments beginning in August
August	• Make changes to your address
Late summer	• Make changes to your dependents, marital status and income • Re-enroll if you previously unenrolled

*** Dates subject to change**

2021 Child Tax Credit and Advance Child Tax Credit Payments: Resources and Guidance

Links to all materials and guidance issued by the IRS regarding the 2021 Child Tax Credit and Advance Child Tax Credit Payments are organized by type for quick reference by congressional offices and partner groups. We continue to encourage people to share this information widely to help reach families in under-served communities and others who aren't normally required to file a tax return.

Accessibility Helpline available for taxpayers with disabilities

The IRS established the Accessibility Helpline to answer questions related to current and future accessibility products and services available in alternative media formats (such as braille, large print, audio, and so on) to taxpayers with disabilities. Taxpayers who need accessibility help can call 833-690-0598.

The Accessibility Helpline doesn't have access to taxpayers' IRS accounts. Anyone needing help with tax law, refunds or other account related issues, should visit the Let Us Help You page on IRS.gov.

A Closer Look: Enhancing systems and processes to better serve taxpayers

In the most recent issue of A Closer Look, Harrison Smith and Justin Abold-LaBreche, co-directors, IRS Enterprise Digitalization & Case Management, discuss how they're trying to improve the taxpayer experience by modernizing and consolidating business processes and policies. "We both feel strongly that when IRS employees can rapidly resolve taxpayer issues in a simplified digital environment, we can dramatically improve the taxpayer experience," said Smith and Abold-LaBreche. This feature is also available in Spanish.

A Closer Look: Accelerating Digital Communications to Solve Pandemic Challenges and Improve the Taxpayer Experience

Another post on "A Closer Look," featured Commissioner De Lon Harris, Small Business/Self Employed Examination who discusses how the high-priority Taxpayer Digital Communication initiative is enhancing communications with taxpayers through digital channels. "A Closer Look" is also available in Spanish.

A Closer Look: Providing Quality Service in Challenging Times

In a third post of A Closer Look, Accounts Management Director Karen Michaels from Wage & Investment discusses how the IRS continuously strives to provide the help taxpayers need to properly file and pay their taxes while also enforcing the tax laws to maintain fairness for all. This feature is also available in Spanish.

Virtual Nationwide Tax Forum webinar schedule

This year's Tax Forum for tax professionals will deliver 30 livestreamed webinars (28 eligible CE credits), offered every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m ET each week through August 19. There will be two webinars presented in English **and** Spanish as part of this summer's virtual program: "Tax Law Changes from a Forms Perspective" and "Professional Responsibility Obligations when Practicing Before the IRS." Visit the IRS Nationwide Tax Forum website for a detailed description of the webinar topics and the webinar schedule.

The Dirty Dozen represents the worst of the worst tax scams

Compiled annually, the “Dirty Dozen” lists a variety of common scams that taxpayers may encounter anytime, but many of these schemes peak during filing season as people prepare their returns or hire someone to help with their taxes. Don’t fall prey.

For a detailed description of each scam, please refer to the list below:

- IR-2021-144, IRS wraps up its 2021 "Dirty Dozen" scams list with warning about promoted abusive arrangements
- IR-2021-141, IRS "Dirty Dozen" list warns people to watch out for tax-related scams involving fake charities, ghost preparers and other schemes
- IR-2021-137, IRS urges caution with email, social media and phones as part of "Dirty Dozen" series
- IR-2021-135, IRS announces "Dirty Dozen" tax scams for 2021

National Taxpayer Advocate Erin M. Collins issues June Report to Congress

National Taxpayer Advocate Erin M. Collins recently released her FY 2022 Objectives Report to Congress. The report includes an assessment of the 2021 filing season, identifies key objectives the Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS) will pursue during the upcoming fiscal year, and contains the IRS responses to each of the 73 administrative recommendations the NTA made in her 2020 Annual Report to Congress.

The NTA’s report emphasizes that the difficulties the IRS faced in performing its traditional work due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the added responsibilities it was assigned to make three rounds of stimulus payments combined to create significant challenges for taxpayers. Additionally, the report describes key issues TAS plans to focus on during the upcoming fiscal year.

Read about these issues and more in the complete June Report to Congress.

Salt Lake City Taxpayer Advocate Service office merged into Ogden, Utah, office

The Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS) merged two of its offices in Utah into one office located in Ogden, effective June 20, 2021. TAS has been unable to adequately staff the Salt Lake City office for several years, so much of the casework already was being handled in Ogden. To maximize use of TAS resources and meet taxpayers’ needs, TAS made the decision to consolidate its two Utah offices. Additionally, TAS is increasing staffing in its Ogden office to support your constituents and continue to provide excellent service to all taxpayers.

This merger has minimal effect on congressional referrals generated from Utah senators and representatives. Previously, congressional referrals were handled by both the Salt Lake City and Ogden offices, and now all congressional referrals will be handled by the Ogden office.

Here’s the Ogden office address:

324 25th Street
2nd Floor, Suite 2001
Ogden, UT 84401

The local taxpayer advocate, Sherri Holcomb, can be reached at the following numbers or email address:

- Telephone, 801-620-3000
- Fax, 855-832-7126
- Email address, Sherri.L.Holcomb@irs.gov

This merger will allow TAS to continue to provide constituents with outstanding service while advocating on their behalf.

Additional information on IRS.gov

FAQs available to aid families and small business under the American Rescue Plan

2020 Recovery Rebate Credit

Advance Child Tax Credit

Coronavirus tax relief and Economic Impact Payments

Get up-to-date status on affected IRS operations and services during COVID-19

Tax relief in disaster situations

IRS continues unemployment compensation adjustments, prepares another 1.5 million refunds

Tax treatment of unemployment compensation

Third Economic Impact Payments

What taxpayers need to know about using the IRS Tax Withholding Estimator

What organizations should understand about applying for tax-exempt status

Cryptocurrency fraudster sentenced for money laundering and securities fraud in multimillion-dollar investment scheme

San Diego dentist sentenced for tax evasion scheme with former Chabad of Poway Rabbi

Odessa businessman sentenced to federal prison for defrauding family and friends out of $18 million

Russian national sentenced to 5 years and deportation for bribery, visa fraud, and tax charges, forfeiting $5.9 million

Help on IRS.gov

Filing – Payments – Refunds – Credits & Deductions – Forms & Instructions – Tax Questions

IRS in other languages

Spanish - Chinese - Korean - Russian - Vietnamese - ASL (YouTube)

IRS on social media

YouTube – Twitter – Instagram - FaceBook

IRS2Go is the official mobile app of the IRS, available in both English and Spanish.

The *IRS Congressional Update* is a monthly newsletter, prepared by IRS Legislative Affairs. For information on resolving taxpayer account issues, visit Taxpayer Advocate Service.