



Consumer Federation of America

Consumer FAQs About Economic Impact Payments

The CARES Act was passed by Congress and signed into law on March 27, 2020 to provide economic support due to the impacts of COVID-19. Among other provisions, the CARES Act created a mechanism to provide direct payments to some Americans who qualify. The Economic Impact Payments or stimulus payments are payments that the federal government has begun making directly to consumers to assist them during the COVID-19 pandemic.

How much will I receive?

U.S. Residents with Social Security numbers and income up to \$75,000 annually will receive \$1,200 in a one-time stimulus payment. For incomes above \$75,000, you will receive \$5 less for every additional \$100 earned. Parents with children aged 16 and below will receive an additional \$500 per child. To calculate your stimulus payment, you can use the [Washington Post's calculator](#).



Those who earn more than \$99,000, who do not have a Social Security number, or who have been claimed as a dependent on someone else's tax returns will not receive payments.

When will I receive my payment?

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) began issuing stimulus payments on April 11. During this first wave, the IRS is issuing stimulus payments to people who filed tax returns for 2018 or 2019 and authorized direct deposit. Social Security recipients and railroad retirees who are not required to file tax returns and did not file in 2018 or 2019 are also included in the first round.

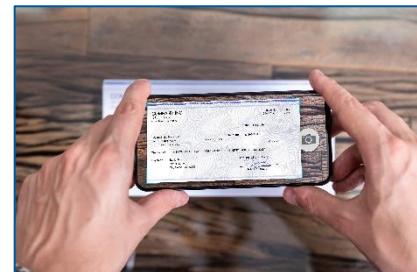
The IRS will then mail 5 million paper checks per week from early May over a period of 20 weeks, beginning with households with the lowest annual income and continuing upwards. The IRS also created a tracking tool called "[Get My Payment](#)," where you will be able track your mailed check and add direct deposit information.

How does the government know where to send my payment?

If you submitted your 2019 tax return (the one most people are working on now), the IRS will use your direct deposit information from that return. If you have yet to file your 2019 tax return, the IRS will look to your 2018 tax return for direct deposit information. If you have not entered direct deposit information or you do not file taxes, the IRS will send your stimulus payment by check in the mail. If you are not required to file taxes and would like to provide the IRS with direct deposit information, [you can do so here](#).

What if my direct deposit information has changed since my last filing?

If you haven't filed your 2019 taxes (the ones most people are still working on), you should use the IRS [free filing program](#) to file your 2019 taxes as soon as possible. If you have filed your 2019 taxes, use "[Get My Payment](#)" to add your direct deposit information. If the IRS hasn't issued your payment yet, you will be able to update your direct deposit information on "[Get My Payment](#)."



What if I don't have a bank account?

If you do not have a bank account, you will receive your stimulus payment as a check in the mail. However, the IRS is expecting this process to take a long time (some recipients may not receive checks until September).

If you would like to open a bank account to receive your payment sooner, [Join Bank On](#) has a list of low fee, safe checking accounts that do not have overdraft fees or NSF (nonsufficient funds) fees. These checking accounts can be opened online and are open to people with blemished bank account histories. The list of certified accounts can be found by [scrolling down on this page](#). If you filed your taxes in 2018 or 2019, you will need to tell the IRS about your new bank account which you can do at "[Get My Payment](#)." If you are not required to file your taxes, you can [tell the IRS about your new bank account here](#).

What if I haven't filed my taxes in 2018 or 2019 and want to submit my direct deposit information?

You should use the IRS [free filing program](#) to file your 2019 taxes as soon as possible. Additionally, if your income changed in 2019 making you eligible for a stimulus payment, you also want to [file as soon as possible](#).



What if I have moved since I filed my taxes and want my check to be mailed to me?

There are a number of ways to alert the IRS of a change of address. [A full list can be found here](#).

If my income is currently being garnished due to a loan default, will the stimulus payment be garnished as well?

It depends. If your debt is owed to the federal and state governments (federal student loans, back taxes, etc.), the CARES Act temporarily suspends these efforts. However, if you have any other garnishment or bank offsets, your stimulus payment may still be subject to garnishment. Certain locations (Las Vegas, NV, Washington, D.C., Massachusetts, and Texas) have temporarily stopped the enforcement of all new and existing garnishment orders. If you are worried this is the case, contact an attorney immediately. [Legal Services Corporation](#) has offices in every state, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories and provides legal aid to low-income Americans.