



Press Release

For More Information
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For Immediate Release
02/17/08

Seniors Must File 2007 Tax Return to Receive Economic Stimulus Payments

Denver, CO. Starting in May 2008, the US Treasury will begin sending economic stimulus payments to more than 130 million individuals, including low income seniors. The stimulus payments will be available through December 31, 2008.

For most Americans, the stimulus payment will be calculated using the 2007 income tax return. However, many low income seniors who previously have not been required to file income taxes, will need to file this year to claim the stimulus payment.

Individuals who do not have a tax liability may qualify for a minimum payment of \$300 (\$600 for a couple filing jointly) if their tax return reflects \$3000 or more in qualifying income. Payments can be as high as \$600 for a single person and \$1200 for a couple.

Qualifying income consists of wages and net self-employment income, Social Security, Railroad Retirement benefits, and veterans' disability compensation, pension or survivors' benefits received from the Department of Veterans Affairs in 2007. Supplemental Security Income does not qualify as income for the stimulus payment.

Taxpayers must have a valid Social Security number.

To claim the benefit, individuals must claim their Social Security, Railroad Retirement benefits and/or Veterans' benefits on Line 14a of Form 1040A or Line 20a of Form 1040. Individuals who have already filed their return, but failed to report the Social Security, Railroad Retirement or Veterans' benefits should file an amended return by using Form 1040X. This may result in a higher stimulus payment. Taxpayers should write "Stimulus Payment" at the top of the form.

Individuals who are claimed as a dependent on someone else's return are ineligible. Nonresident aliens are also not eligible for a payment.

The stimulus payment is not taxable and will not affect other benefits such as LEAP and food stamps.

Stimulus payments will be direct deposited for taxpayers who select that option when filing the 2007 tax returns. To have the payment direct deposited, complete

the bank routing number and bank account number on the tax return. Others will receive a paper check. Persons who have requested a Refund Anticipation Loan will receive a paper check.

The IRS warns of several scams that are already occurring. In one scam, the individual receives a call from someone identifying themselves as an IRS employee, indicates the senior is eligible for the rebate and to claim the money, the caller must have the individual's bank account information. If the individual refuses to provide the information, the caller indicates the individual is not eligible for a rebate.

The IRS is also aware of refund-related bogus e-mail informing the recipient of eligibility for a specific amount. The e-mail instructs the recipient to click on a link to access a refund claim form which requests personal information, including bank account information.

Another e-mail scheme is directed toward tax-exempt organizations. The e-mail contains the signature of the Director of the IRS's Exempt Organizations Business Division with instructions to provide personal information.

The IRS and the US Treasury do not contact individuals by phone or e-mail to advise them about the stimulus payment. Report any of these suspicious activities to local law enforcement or the IRS with as much information as possible about the caller or the e-mail.

Individuals can receive free assistance in completing the forms. To locate the nearest AARP Tax-Aide site, call 1-888-227-7669 or visit AARP's Internet site https://locator.aarp.org/vmis/sites/tax_aide_locator.jsp or the closest VITA site at 1-800-906-9887. Individuals can also call 303-333-3482 for assistance.

Eileen Doherty, M.S. is the Executive Director of Senior Answers and Services and the Colorado Gerontological Society. She has 30 years of experience in gerontology in administration, research, training and education, and clinical practice. She can be reached at 303-333-3482 or at doherty001@att.net.