



A Message from Chuck Rettig

IRS Commissioner



As we begin a new week, I want to discuss certain effects the COVID-19 outbreak has had and to express our pride in the sacrifices many IRS employees have made in keeping our mission-critical functions operating.

Our mission dictates that some of us must report to the workplace and continue our vital function on behalf of our people and our country, and our new guidelines starting today reflect that. The success of our country depends, in significant part, upon the achievements of the IRS. The success of the IRS depends upon each of us, none more or less so than any others. To support social distancing, we've now moved into a status of having only mission-essential employees at our offices and campuses. We have eliminated almost all external in-person contacts, significantly scaled back many functions and services, closed many offices and will continue to reassess this situation moving forward.

My purpose in coming onboard was to expand the opportunities we all have as IRS employees to enhance the trust and respect the American people have in our agency. Many of you have met me and know me. I care about each of you, your families and your friends. Please know that our options are limited by our responsibilities to the American people and approved guidance for all federal agencies. Together with HCO, we are pursuing all options that may be available to some of you who are required to continue working in certain IRS locations.

Tax relief applies to you. The Treasury Department and the IRS have announced special tax relief for tax year 2019 in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The special federal tax extensions for tax year 2019 apply to every IRS employee. Whatever relief is afforded to taxpayers will also be afforded to you. The filing and payment deadline of July 15, 2020 applies to all IRS employees. More details are available on the IRS Source's [COVID-19](#) page.

Filing season. Thanks to you, the current filing season is proceeding smoothly and refunds continue to go out. Through March 20, taxpayers have received 65 million

refunds worth more than \$191 billion – money that’s critical for people right now. These refunds bring a sense of normalcy during uncertain times; our efforts can positively influence people and bring some degree of calmness into their lives.

Telework. With more of our employees moving into telework status, you should be proud to know that our IT network is holding up extremely well. Like you, our IT folks are exceptional! We’ve seen a record of more than 44,000 employees teleworking on ERAP at one time – representing more than half of our workforce. We’re also doing what we can to help other employees become capable of doing their jobs remotely; it’s a challenging situation with the coronavirus hitting across much of the country. Our teams are doing their best to accommodate everyone, and your patience is greatly appreciated by them and by me.

CARES Act. Under the CARES Act signed into law on Friday, our country is relying upon us to help deliver almost 150 million economic impact payments to the American people, as quickly as possible. Eligible taxpayers (including you, if you meet the eligibility requirements) who filed tax returns for either 2019 or 2018 will [automatically receive an economic impact payment](#) of up to \$1,200 for individuals or \$2,400 for married couples. Parents will also get \$500 for each qualifying child. Our implementation teams have been working long hours, every day for weeks and over weekends, to determine and implement the ultimate delivery of these payments. We will soon be sharing more details, but you should be proud to know that we are on schedule to be able to get these economic impact payments issued quickly.

IRS Ambassadors needed, now more than ever. I’d also like to ask for your help. Those eligible for the economic impact payments include seniors, veterans and others who normally don’t make enough money to file a tax return. We’re going to provide online assistance to help them file a return with a few basic details so they can receive these payments as quickly as possible. At this difficult time, I’d encourage you to continue serving as an IRS ambassador to virtually assist your friends, family and others in your community who may be overlooked and share this information. These payments could make a significant difference to people who may not even realize they’re eligible. We’ll be adding more official information on [IRS.gov/coronavirus](https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus) for you to share. I also encourage those of you on social media to follow and share information from our feeds on Twitter (@IRSnews), Instagram (@IRSnews) and Facebook (IRS). Each of you can make a difference!

People First. At the end of the day, these efforts are about helping people. For our compliance efforts, we've announced our [People First Initiative](#). This is a sweeping series of steps to assist taxpayers by providing relief on issues ranging from easing payment guidelines to postponing compliance actions. We have deferred many activities to ease the burden on people facing tax issues. During this difficult time, we want people working together, focused on their well-being, helping each other and others less fortunate.

[COVID-19 page](#) on IRS Source. Our internal work to help employees also continues non-stop. I know there are many questions and concerns, and there are countless employees working to provide answers for you. Please visit the [COVID-19 page](#) on IRS Source and review dozens of [frequently asked questions](#). We are now issuing daily email updates to both managers and employees to share important information. And if you have employees or coworkers who are unable to access these pages, please reach out to them and encourage them to bookmark the [employee emergency page on IRS.gov](#) for the latest information.

During these uncertain times, while many people are sheltering at home, many IRS and other federal employees have been and will continue to provide their best efforts since we cannot and will not fail in *our responsibilities* to this country. I'm confident in every part of the IRS team to deliver: Our people are great, and we care a lot. But I must again ask for your continued patience and understanding as we navigate our way forward – together – to support each other and the American people. Please stay safe and take care of your families, friends and others.

–Chuck