



# Time running out to claim \$1 billion in refunds for tax year 2020, taxpayers face May 17 deadline

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WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service announced today that almost 940,000 people across the nation have unclaimed refunds for tax year 2020 but face a May 17 deadline to submit their tax returns.

The IRS estimates more than \$1 billion in refunds remain unclaimed because people haven't filed their 2020 tax returns yet. The average median refund is \$932 for 2020, and the state-by-state table below shows how many people are potentially eligible for these refunds in each state along with the median average refund by state.

“There's money remaining on the table for hundreds of thousands of people who haven't filed 2020 tax returns,” said IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel. “We want taxpayers to claim these refunds, but time is running out for people who may have overlooked or forgotten about these refunds. There's a May 17 deadline to file these returns so taxpayers should start soon to make sure they don't miss out.”

Under the law, taxpayers usually have three years to file and claim their tax refunds. If they don't file within three years, the money becomes the property of the U.S. Treasury.

But for 2020 tax returns, people have a little more time than usual to file to claim their refunds. Typically, the normal filing deadline to claim old refunds falls around the April tax deadline, which is April 15 this year for 2023 tax returns. But the three-year window for 2020 unfiled returns was postponed to May 17, 2024, due to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency. The IRS issued [Notice 2023-21](#) on Feb. 27, 2023, providing legal guidance on claims required by the postponed deadline.

The IRS estimates the midpoint for the individual refund amounts for 2020 to be \$932 — that is, half of the refunds are more than \$932 and half are less. This estimate does not include the Recovery Rebate Credit or other credits that may be applicable; the IRS has [previously reminded](#) those who may be entitled to the COVID-era Recovery Rebate Credit in 2020 that time is running out to file a tax return and claim their money.

“People faced extremely unusual situations during the pandemic, which may have led some people to forget about a potential refund on their 2020 tax returns,” Werfel said. “People may have just overlooked these, including students, part-time workers and others. Some people may not realize they may be owed a refund. We encourage people to review their files and start gathering records now, so they don’t run the risk of missing the May deadline.”

By missing out on filing a tax return, people stand to lose more than just their refund of taxes withheld or paid during 2020. Many low- and moderate-income workers may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). For 2020, the EITC was worth as much as \$6,660 for taxpayers with qualifying children. The EITC helps individuals and families whose incomes are below certain thresholds. The thresholds for 2020 were:

- \$50,594 (\$56,844 if married filing jointly) for those with three or more qualifying children;
- \$47,440 (\$53,330 if married filing jointly) for people with two qualifying children;
- \$41,756 (\$47,646 if married filing jointly) for those with one qualifying child, and;
- \$15,820 (\$21,710 if married filing jointly) for people without qualifying children.

The IRS reminds taxpayers seeking a 2020 tax refund that their funds may be held if they have not filed tax returns for 2021 and 2022. In addition, any refund amount for 2020 will be applied to amounts still owed to the IRS or a state tax agency and may be used to offset unpaid child support or other past due federal debts, such as student loans.

Current and prior year tax forms (such as the tax year 2020 Forms 1040 and 1040-SR) and instructions are available on the IRS.gov [Forms & Instructions](#) page or by calling toll-free [800-TAX-FORM](#) (800-829-3676).

## High-income non-filers: IRS compliance letters coming

The IRS also announced Feb. 29 a [new effort](#) focused on high-income taxpayers who have failed to file federal income tax returns in more than 125,000 instances since 2017 with taxes being owed in many of those cases.

The new initiative, made possible by Inflation Reduction Act funding, began with IRS compliance letters going out in February on more than 125,000 cases where tax returns haven’t been filed since 2017. The mailings include more than 25,000 to those with more than \$1 million in income, and over 100,000 to people with incomes between \$400,000 and \$1 million between tax years 2017 and 2021.

## Need to file a 2020 tax return? Several options to get key documents

Although it’s been a few years since 2020, the IRS reminds taxpayers there are ways they can still gather the information they need to file this tax return. But people should start early to make sure they have enough time to file before the May deadline for 2020 refunds. Here are some options:

- **Request copies of key documents:** Taxpayers who are missing Forms W-2, 1098, 1099 or 5498 for the years, 2020, 2021 or 2022 can request copies from their employer, bank or other payers.

- **Use Get Transcript Online at IRS.gov.** Taxpayers who are unable to get those missing forms from their employer or other payers can order a free wage and income transcript at IRS.gov using the [Get Transcript Online](#) tool. For many taxpayers, this is by far the quickest and easiest option.
- **Request a transcript.** Another option is for people to file [Form 4506-T](#) with the IRS to request a “wage and income transcript.” A wage and income transcript shows data from information returns received by the IRS, such as Forms W-2, 1099, 1098, Form 5498 and IRA contribution information. Taxpayers can use the information from the transcript to file their tax return. But plan ahead – these written requests can take several weeks; people are strongly urged to try the other options first.

## State-by-state estimates of individuals who may be due 2020 income tax refunds

Based on tax information currently available, the IRS estimated how many people in each state may be entitled to a tax refund. The actual refund amount will vary based on a household’s tax situation.

State or district	Estimated number of individuals	Median potential refund	Total potential refunds *
Alabama	15,200	\$926	\$16,839,800
Alaska	3,700	\$931	\$4,335,300
Arizona	25,400	\$871	\$26,939,600
Arkansas	8,700	\$923	\$9,392,600
California	88,200	\$835	\$94,226,300
Colorado	18,500	\$894	\$20,109,900
Connecticut	9,800	\$978	\$11,343,600
Delaware	3,600	\$945	\$4,156,500
District of Columbia	2,900	\$968	\$3,503,800
Florida	53,200	\$891	\$58,210,500
Georgia	36,400	\$900	\$39,175,600
Hawaii	5,200	\$979	\$5,972,600
Idaho	4,500	\$761	\$4,369,600

<b>State or district</b>	<b>Estimated number of individuals</b>	<b>Median potential refund</b>	<b>Total potential refunds *</b>
Illinois	36,200	\$956	\$40,608,000
Indiana	19,200	\$922	\$20,893,000
Iowa	9,600	\$953	\$10,601,700
Kansas	8,700	\$900	\$9,285,600
Kentucky	10,600	\$920	\$11,236,300
Louisiana	15,100	\$957	\$17,357,300
Maine	3,800	\$923	\$4,030,200
Maryland	22,200	\$991	\$26,365,400
Massachusetts	21,800	\$975	\$25,071,800
Michigan	34,900	\$976	\$38,274,800
Minnesota	13,500	\$818	\$14,043,900
Mississippi	8,100	\$861	\$8,685,000
Missouri	19,500	\$893	\$20,803,400
Montana	3,400	\$851	\$3,632,100
Nebraska	4,700	\$901	\$5,007,300
Nevada	10,200	\$890	\$11,143,900
New Hampshire	4,200	\$982	\$4,923,100
New Jersey	24,400	\$920	\$27,408,300
New Mexico	6,500	\$868	\$7,032,700
New York	51,400	\$1,029	\$60,837,400
North Carolina	27,500	\$895	\$29,304,100

<b>State or district</b>	<b>Estimated number of individuals</b>	<b>Median potential refund</b>	<b>Total potential refunds *</b>
North Dakota	2,200	\$953	\$2,482,600
Ohio	31,400	\$909	\$32,939,900
Oklahoma	14,300	\$902	\$15,566,900
Oregon	15,300	\$847	\$15,857,800
Pennsylvania	38,600	\$1,031	\$43,412,900
Rhode Island	2,600	\$986	\$2,980,500
South Carolina	11,900	\$840	\$12,564,900
South Dakota	2,200	\$892	\$2,346,300
Tennessee	16,800	\$909	\$18,007,000
Texas	93,400	\$960	\$107,130,200
Utah	7,800	\$836	\$8,191,700
Vermont	1,700	\$911	\$1,818,600
Virginia	25,900	\$914	\$28,944,600
Washington	26,200	\$976	\$31,110,300
West Virginia	3,800	\$950	\$4,130,400
Wisconsin	11,800	\$837	\$12,139,400
Wyoming	2,100	\$961	\$2,416,300
<b>Totals</b>	<b>938,800</b>	<b>\$932</b>	<b>\$1,037,161,300</b>

\* Excluding credits.

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