

April 28, 2007

## **Frequently Asked Questions: Receiving the Stimulus Payment**

**Q. I received a check in the mail from the federal government. How can I tell whether it is my stimulus payment?**

A. Look for the words, "2008 Economic Stimulus Payment" on the front of the check, below your address.

**Q. I received my stimulus payment, but it was less than what my friends and neighbors received. Why?**

A. Many, but not all, taxpayers qualify for the maximum basic payment of \$600 for singles or \$1,200 for married couples. Many parents are also receiving an additional \$300 for each qualifying child, born after Dec. 31, 1990.

Your payment may be less than the maximum for one or more of the following reasons:

- You are single and your net income tax liability is less than \$600. If you file Form 1040 net income tax liability is the amount shown on Line 57, plus the amount on Line 52.
- You are married and your net income tax liability is less than \$1,200.
- You are single and your adjusted gross income (AGI) is more than \$75,000. On Form 1040, AGI is the amount on Line 37.
- You are married filing a joint return and your AGI is more than \$150,000.
- You owe back taxes.
- You have non-tax federal debts such as unpaid student loans or child-support obligations.

Around the same time you receive your payment, you will receive a notice from the IRS explaining how your payment was figured. It is important to keep this notice as a record of your economic stimulus payment. In addition, you'll get a separate notice if you owe back taxes or non-tax debts.

The "Stimulus Payments: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions," section on IRS.gov has further details on how these payments are figured.

<http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=179181,00.html>

**Q. The notice I received shows I should have gotten more than the government actually deposited into my bank account. Did something go wrong?**

A. It could be that the amount deposited into your bank account was what remained of your stimulus payment after it was offset for money you owed on

back taxes or other debts such as a student loan or child support. If this is the case, you'll receive an additional notice, providing details on the offset.

**Q. I received a stimulus payment and I want to verify that it is correct. How do I figure the payment, myself?**

A. The easiest way to figure the amount is to use the Economic Stimulus Payment Calculator on IRS.gov. Essentially, there are two parts to the stimulus payment: a basic amount based on tax liability, filing status or other qualifying factors, if there is no tax liability, and an additional amount based on whether a qualifying child is reported on the return.

Basic Amount of Payment: If you had a net income tax liability for 2007, you will generally receive a payment, unless you can be claimed as a dependent on someone else's return, had higher income or do not have a valid Social Security Number.

Your net income tax liability is one of the following:

- On Form 1040, the amount shown on Line 57 plus the amount on Line 52;
- On Form 1040A, the amount shown on Line 35 plus the amount on Line 32; or
- On Form 1040EZ, the amount on Line 10.

NOTE: Don't be confused. Net income tax liability is not the same as the amount of tax withheld from your pay, the amount of your refund or the balance due on your return.

Your stimulus payment is equal to your net income tax liability, but no more than \$600, if you are single, or \$1,200, if you are married filing a joint return. The minimum payment is \$300 for a single person or \$600 for a married couple filing jointly.

If you had no net income tax liability for 2007, you are usually getting a minimum payment of \$300, if you are single, or \$600, if you are married filing jointly, as long as you had qualifying income of at least \$3,000 in 2007. To figure your qualifying income, add together the following amounts:

- Wages that are reported on Form W-2.
- Net self-employment income that is taken into account in computing taxable income.
- Social Security benefits reported in box 5 of the 2007 Form SSA-1099 you received in January 2008. If you don't have this form, you can estimate your annual benefit by multiplying your monthly benefit by the number of months (usually 12) you received benefits during 2007.

- Certain Railroad Retirement benefits reported in box 5 of the 2007 Form RRB-1099 you received in January 2008.
- Veterans' benefits received in 2007, including veterans' disability compensation and pension or survivors' benefits received from the Department of Veterans Affairs. You can estimate your annual benefit by multiplying your monthly benefit by the number of months during 2007 you received benefits.
- Nontaxable combat pay if you chose to include it as earned income on your 2007 return.

Note: Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is not considered qualifying income and is not included for the purpose of establishing eligibility for the stimulus payment.

Extra Money for Qualifying Child: If you qualify for the basic amount, you may receive an additional \$300 for each qualifying child. To qualify, a child must be younger than age 17 and have a valid Social Security Number.

Phase Out: Your payment is reduced, or you may receive no payment at all, if your income is higher. The stimulus payment — both the basic component and the additional funds for qualifying children — begins to phase out for individuals with adjusted gross incomes (AGI) over \$75,000 and married couples who file a joint return with AGI over \$150,000. The combined payment is reduced by 5 percent of the income above the AGI thresholds. Your AGI is the amount shown on:

- Form 1040, Line 37
- Form 1040A, Line 21, or
- Form 1040EZ, Line 4

**Q. I filed my return on time, but I haven't received my stimulus payment, even though the payment date listed for my Social Security Number has passed. Why?**

A. In general, the payment schedule only applies if the IRS finished processing your return before April 15. If you filed your return on time, but close to the April 15 deadline, the IRS may not have finished processing it before April 15.

Processing times for tax returns and stimulus payments vary. If you are getting a regular income-tax refund, the IRS will send you that refund first. Normally, your stimulus payment will follow one to two weeks later.

If you are not expecting a regular tax refund, your stimulus payment should arrive a minimum of six weeks after you file.

**Q. I filed after April 15 and the payment date for my Social Security Number has passed. How long will it take for me to get my stimulus payment?**

A. It will generally take a minimum of six weeks after you file your return to get your stimulus payment.