

Dear Community member,

This letter is to provide some information about the federal government's recently enacted *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Securities* ("CARES Act") and to alert you that you may need to **take action** to receive an economic impact (cash) payment.

Economic Impact Payment. The recent CARES Act entitles individuals with social security numbers (SSN) to a one-time cash payment (often referred to as the "economic impact payment," "rebate," or "recovery rebate"). To qualify for the full \$1,200 payment, an individual must earn less than \$75,000 per year, or, for a married couple filing jointly, under \$150,000 per year. Families with qualifying children, under the age of 17, also will receive \$500 per child. Individuals who earn *over* \$75,000 (or \$150,000 for a jointly filing couple) may be entitled to a reduced cash payment or a future tax credit, depending on their level of income in 2019 and 2020.

For many individuals, the federal government will make a one-time CARES Act direct deposit, estimated in mid-April, 2020. However, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) may only do so if the IRS has your bank information and has information about your income for 2018 and/or 2019. Please ensure that your address and bank information is correct on your 2018 and/or 2019 filings.

If you did not file a tax return for 2018 or 2019, you may need to take action to receive the economic impact payment, even if you were not required to file a tax return.

The IRS urges anyone with a tax filing obligation to file as soon as possible to receive an economic impact payment. Generally, taxpayers are encouraged to include direct deposit banking information on the tax return for fastest receipt of the economic impact payment. If you do not wish to use direct deposit, then the government will send a physical check by mail.

If you were *not* required to file a tax return in 2018 or 2019 and receive certain benefits, the IRS will use the information on the Form SSA-1099 or Form RRB-1099 to generate economic impact payments to recipients of benefits reflected in those forms. Please be aware that because the IRS would not have information regarding any *dependents* (qualifying children) for individuals who do not file a tax return in 2018/2019, you may still wish to file a simplified tax return to ensure you receive the full economic impact payment to which your family is entitled.

If you are concerned about not having access to tax professionals or local community organization in person to get help with a tax return, these economic impact payments will be available throughout the rest of 2020.

If the IRS does not have your direct deposit information, in the coming weeks, the Treasury Department plans to develop an online portal for individuals to provide their banking information to the IRS online.

Garnishment. The stimulus payment will not be garnished for federal tax debt. If you have concerns that your cash payment may be *garnished* please review the handout from the National Consumer Law Center on preventing garnishment of stimulus checks. You can view that handout at https://www.nclc.org/images/pdf/special_projects/covid-19/IB_Garnishment_Stimulus_Checks.pdf. We recommend speaking with your attorney about other strategies to protect your cash payment, if you have concerns about this issue.

Effect on Eligibility for SSI, Medicaid, TANF, and Housing Assistance. The economic impact payments are not taxable and *will not count as income or resources for means-tested programs*. In other words, receiving the payment will not affect your eligibility for SSI, SNAP, Medicaid, ACA premium credits, TANF, housing assistance, or other income-related federal programs.

The economic impact payment will not count as a *resource* for a 12-month period. You should make plans to ensure your resources are spent down within that time.

Tax Filing Deadline. The federal 2019 income tax filing deadline has been *extended without penalty* to July 15, 2020. This relief applies to all individual returns and is automatic. You do not need to file any additional forms or call the IRS to qualify for the extended deadline. A deadline extension also applies to your Oregon *state taxes*.

Scams and Identity Theft. There are predatory scams and identity theft operations attempting to take advantage of the current circumstances. Do not trust calls, emails, or text messages from individuals claiming to be from the IRS, Social Security Administration, or other government agency. *Do not provide information about your banking accounting or social security number over the phone, by text, or by email*. If you receive a message stating that you must provide more information to receive your economic impact payment, it is a scam.

More information. You may wish to go to the IRS website: <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus>, or for updates about your economic impact payment, you can go to: <https://www.irs.gov/refunds>. The enclosed flyer has more detailed information for your convenience.

Best wishes,

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