

IRS Oversight Board

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IRS OVERSIGHT BOARD RELEASES ANNUAL TAXPAYER ATTITUDE SURVEY RESULTS

Today the IRS Oversight Board released its 2004 Taxpayer Attitude Survey. The survey, conducted annually each year, is used by the Board to follow trends regarding attitudes on taxpayer compliance and tax administration services.

The 2004 survey shows that taxpayer attitudes toward cheating have returned to 2002 levels: Eight-six percent feel it is “not at all” acceptable to cheat on income taxes. Twelve percent believe it is acceptable to cheat, a five percent decrease from the previous year.

The survey also shows that almost three-quarters surveyed felt that “It is every American’s civic duty to pay their fair share of taxes,” a five percent increase from the previous year. The level is still eight percent below 1999 results.

In addition, those surveyed supported additional funding for the IRS — 62 percent agreed that “The IRS should receive extra funding to enforce tax laws and ensure taxpayer pay what they owe,” while 64 percent believe “The IRS should receive extra funding so it can assist more taxpayers over the phone and in person.”

The Board’s Taxpayer Attitude Survey was started in 2002. The 2002 survey asked questions primarily on attitudes about compliance, and used questions and methodology identical to that used by the IRS in a 1999 survey. The survey was expanded in 2003 to include additional questions about taxpayers’ expectations about customer service. In 2004, the survey was expanded to add a question on taxpayers’ willingness to provide additional funding for IRS service and enforcement functions.

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