



Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration Office of Audit

INTERIM RESULTS OF THE 2015 FILING SEASON

Issued on March 31, 2015

Highlights

Highlights of Report Number: 2015-40-032 to the Internal Revenue Service Commissioner for the Wage and Investment Division.

IMPACT ON TAXPAYERS

The filing season, defined as the period from January 1 through mid-April, is critical for the IRS because it is during this time that most individuals file their income tax returns and contact the IRS if they have questions about specific laws or filing procedures.

WHY TIGTA DID THE AUDIT

The objective of this review was to provide selected information related to the IRS's 2015 Filing Season. TIGTA plans to issue the final results of our analysis of the 2015 Filing Season in September 2015.

WHAT TIGTA FOUND

Prior to the start of this filing season, the IRS was challenged by the late enactment of tax provisions that were set to expire. To reduce the impact on the filing season, the IRS monitored the status of the extender legislation and took steps prior to its enactment to prepare for the extension of these provisions. These efforts enabled the IRS to begin accepting and processing individual tax returns on January 20, 2015, as scheduled.

As of March 6, 2015, the IRS received more than 66.7 million tax returns—more than 62.3 million (93.5 percent) were filed electronically and more than 4.3 million (6.5 percent) were filed on paper. The IRS has issued more than 54.2 million refunds totaling more than \$162 billion. In addition, as of February 26, 2015, the IRS processed 737,148 tax returns that reported more than \$2.1 billion in Premium Tax Credits that were either received in advance or claimed at the time of filing. More than 3.7 million tax returns reported shared responsibility payments totaling more than \$655 million for not maintaining required health insurance coverage.

The IRS is continuing to expand its efforts to detect tax refund fraud. As of March 7, 2015, the IRS reports that it identified 36,674 tax returns with \$172.9 million claimed in fraudulent refunds and prevented the issuance of

\$132.8 million (76.8 percent) in fraudulent refunds. In addition, the IRS reports that expanded use of controls to identify fraudulent refund claims before they are accepted into the processing system has identified approximately 37,000 fraudulent electronically filed tax returns and approximately 10,000 paper tax returns as of March 5, 2015. The IRS also identified and confirmed 16,523 fraudulent tax returns involving identity theft as of February 28, 2015, and identified 26,797 prisoner tax returns for screening as of March 7, 2015.

During Fiscal Year 2015, the IRS plans to assist 5.3 million taxpayers through face-to-face contact at the Taxpayer Assistance Centers, which is a nearly 4 percent decrease from Fiscal Year 2014. As of March 7, 2015, approximately 45.6 million taxpayers contacted the IRS by calling the various Customer Account Services function toll-free telephone assistance lines. IRS assistors have answered 4.2 million calls and provided a 38.5 percent Level of Service with a 24.6 minute Average Speed of Answer. The Level of Service for the 2014 Filing Season was 74.7 percent.

As a result of continued budget cuts, the IRS is depending even more on technology-based services. As such, the IRS continues to offer more self-assistance options that taxpayers can access 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including its IRS2Go app; YouTube channels; interactive self-help tools on IRS.gov; and Twitter, Tumblr, and Facebook accounts.

WHAT TIGTA RECOMMENDED

This report was prepared to provide interim information only. Therefore, no recommendations were made in the report.

READ THE FULL REPORT

To view the report, including the scope, methodology, and full IRS response, go to:

<http://www.treas.gov/tigta/auditreports/2015reports/201540032fr.pdf>

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