



Social Security

Press Release

Thursday, March 25, 2021
For Immediate Release

Mark Hinkle, Press Officer
press.office@ssa.gov

Statement from Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security, about Economic Impact Payments

"I want to provide an important update about the Social Security Administration's (SSA) processing of Economic Impact Payments (EIPs) under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act.

At each turn over the last 12 months, immediate delivery of EIPs has been, and remains, a top priority for this agency. SSA's public service mission is squarely focused on many of those who are most economically-vulnerable in our society and we owe it to our beneficiaries to ensure they receive their EIPs right away. In fact, it was the substantial efforts of SSA that successfully overcame the fact that the IRS did not have a mechanism to automatically identify Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients, some of the most financially insecure people in America. It was SSA that pushed the prior Administration and Congress to allow us to send to IRS a file of those individuals, who do not receive forms SSA-1099, so that IRS could automatically issue EIPs to them.

Since the time that discussions began regarding issuance of EIPs in the ARP Act, weeks before passage, we have worked tirelessly with our counterparts at IRS to provide to them the information they need to issue payments to our beneficiaries. Despite the fact that Congress did not directly provide SSA funding to support our work on EIPs, we have provided countless hours of assistance to IRS consistent with the laws that establish how we may use the Trust Funds that every American counts on us to protect.

SSA discussed with Treasury and IRS, both before passage and after enactment of the ARP Act, that the Social Security Act does not allow the agency to use our administrative appropriation to conduct work on any non-mission provision or program. Accordingly, we were not authorized to substantively engage Treasury or IRS prior to the ARP's passage. Instead, upon passage, we were required to pursue a reimbursable agreement with IRS because we received no direct appropriation through the ARP Act. From the outset of discussions, we kept congressional staff apprised of the hurdles this approach would create for SSA, and we have continued to update them on our progress with IRS as we completed the required interagency agreements.

Once we were free to move forward, we aggressively worked with Treasury and IRS to issue payments. As a result of our efforts, we successfully signed the reimbursable agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) less than one week after passage, on **March 17**. That process often takes weeks or months to complete, but we got the job done in a matter of days. A few days later, on Monday, **March 22**, SSA sent initial test files to IRS. IRS confirmed testing success on Wednesday, **March 24**. Production files were delivered to IRS before 9 AM on Thursday, **March 25** – more than a week sooner than we were able to provide a similar file to IRS during the first round of EIPs.

While we were working through the agreements with IRS that would fund our efforts to support issuance of EIPs, we were also protecting the integrity of the EIP program by updating the files that IRS will use to issue payments to our beneficiaries. Those updates to our files ensure that payments go to correct bank accounts and addresses, and, that those who are deceased are removed from the files. In short, Social Security employees have literally worked day and night with IRS staff to ensure that the electronic files of Social Security and SSI recipients are complete, accurate, and ready to be used to issue payments. There is no one more committed to serving the public than the employees of this agency, and there should be no doubt whatsoever that they are striving each day to serve the vulnerable populations to whom they have committed their careers. I find any insinuation to the contrary to be unacceptable.

I assure you that we will continue to do all we can to support implementation of the ARP Act."

To get more Social Security news, follow the Press Office on Twitter [@SSAPress](https://twitter.com/SSAPress).