IRS Service Migration 2020-2021
Questionnaire
Survey Title: IRS Tax Assistance Survey

[DISPLAY]

Welcome to the IRS Tax Assistance Survey. The IRS is interested in understanding your needs and preferences for obtaining service to resolve issues you may have related to your taxes.

The Paperwork Reduction Act requires that the IRS display an OMB control number on all public information requests. The OMB Control Number for this study is 1545-2274. The time estimated for participation is 20 minutes. If you have any comments regarding the time estimates associated with this study or suggestions on making this process simpler, please write to the, Internal Revenue Service, Tax Products Coordinating Committee, SE:W:CAR:MP:T:T:SP, 1111 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20224.
 Thank you for your time and your responses.

The questions in this survey have no right or wrong answers. We are simply interested in your opinions.

[RADIO]
[PROMPT IF SKIP]

Q1. In your household, who is familiar with filing last year's federal income tax returns for your household?

- Only you
- You and someone else in your household
- Only someone else in your household (not you)
- Didn't file taxes last year

[CONTINUE IF Q1=1 or 2; ELSE TERMINATE]

[RADIO]
[PROMPT IF SKIP]

Q2. Are you currently employed by the IRS?
- Yes – (Terminate)
- No - (Continue)

[CONTINUE IF Q2="NO"; ELSE TERMINATE]

[DISPLAY IF TERMINATED AFTER Q1 OR Q2]

Thank you for your time. Unfortunately, you are not eligible for this survey.

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

[SP]
Q3. Who was the main person who prepared your most recent Federal tax return for the IRS? Was it: *[Select only one]* *(Must select one)*

- You (yourself)—includes with tax software
- A Paid Tax Preparer (such as H&R Block, accountant or CPA)
- An Unpaid Tax Preparer (friend, relative, colleague, or a volunteer preparer from a community organization)

[RADIO]
[ASK IF YOU/YOURSELF IN Q3]
[PROMPT IF SKIP]
Q4. For this most recent federal tax return, did you mainly use computer software to prepare your taxes, or did you prepare them by hand?
- Used tax software (such as TurboTax)
- Used the IRS Free File program on irs.gov
- Prepared by hand

[RADIO]
[ASK IF YES TO PAID PREPARER IN Q3]
[PROMPT IF SKIP]
Q5. For this most recent federal tax return, did you use a tax preparation firm like H&R Block, or did you use an independent practitioner like an accountant or CPA?
- Tax preparation firm (such as H&R Block or Jackson Hewitt)
- Independent preparer (accountant or CPA)

[RADIO]
[PROMPT IF SKIP][DO NOT SHOW IF Q4=2 USED IRS FREE FILE]
Q6. For this most recent federal tax return, was your return sent to the IRS by paper in the regular mail or was it sent electronically?
- Regular mail
- Electronically
- Other method (e.g. dropped off in person, etc.)

[RADIO]
Q8. Is the most recently filed federal tax return the FIRST federal tax return that you have filed?
- Yes
- No

[DISPLAY]

DESCRIPTION OF TAX ASSISTANCE METHODS

We are going to ask you to <u>think</u> about situations where you need information or assistance related to your taxes and how you would prefer to get the help you need. The main methods of getting help are described below. Please note that most of these methods are currently available, but some will only be available in the future.
- Calling the IRS Toll Free line Visiting the IRS.gov website
- Accessing an IRS personal online account
- Using an IRS smartphone app
- Visiting a local IRS office
- Using an IRS Automated Intelligent Assistant
- Using your tax preparer or tax software
- Video conference call with an IRS representative

We are going to describe each of these to you and later we will ask you about when you might use them.

[RADIO]
IRS TOLL-FREE PHONE LINE

The IRS **Toll-Free line** offers two options:
- An automated self-help menu
- Access to live assistors or Customer Service Representatives

Q9. Do you call the IRS Toll-Free line in the last two years?
- Yes
- No
- I don't recall

[RADIO]
[IF Q9=YES]
Q10. For the most recent interaction on the IRS Toll-Free line, did you……?
- Need to talk to a live phone assistant or Customer Service Representative
- Use the automated menu responses with no live assistance needed

[RADIO]
IRS.GOV WEBSITE

The IRS **website** or irs.gov allows you to browse for general tax information and for answers to your specific tax questions. The website also provides interactive electronic tools to obtain tax information specific to your account. An example of an interactive electronic tool on the website is "Where's my refund" to determine the status of your refund.

[RADIO]
Q11. Did you visit the irs.gov website in the last two years?
- Yes
- No
- I don't recall

[RADIO]
[IF Q11=YES]
Q12. For the most recent visit to the irs.gov website, did you……? (Select all that apply.)
- Browse through various pages to find and read information
- Use an interactive tool to get the answer to a tax law question or complete a task

[RADIO]
IRS PERSONAL ONLINE ACCOUNT

An IRS **personal online account** allows you to login online, confirm your identity, send or receive secure messages and access your IRS tax account for information and transactions.

Q13. Did you use an IRS online account within the last two years?

- Yes
- No
- I don't recall

[RADIO]
IRS SMARTPHONE APP

An IRS **smartphone app**, allows you to complete tasks with IRS or get information. An example of a current smartphone application offered by the IRS is IRS2Go. IRS2Go lets taxpayers check on the status of their tax refund and obtain other helpful tax information.

Q13a. Do you currently own a smartphone?

- Yes
- No, but I am considering buying one
- No, and I am not considering buying one

[PROMPT IF SKIP]
[PRG Q13B: IF Q13A=YES]

Q13b. Do you recall using the IRS smartphone app, IRS2Go, within the last two years?

- Yes
- No

[RADIO]
IRS LOCAL OFFICE (TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE CENTER/TAC)

At IRS **local offices** or Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TAC), IRS service representatives provide in person guidance and assistance with tax transactions. IRS local offices are currently by appointment only.

[RADIO]
Q14. Do you recall visiting a local IRS office for any reason in the last two years?
- Yes
- No

IRS AUTOMATED INTELLIGENT ASSISTANT

The IRS does not currently offer an **Automated Intelligent Assistant (AIA)**, but might offer this service in the future through your phone, smartphone, or computer. An IRS AIA would allow you to explain what help you need from IRS in your own words by speaking or by typing. This is different from an automated phone line where you need to press a number or say a specific pre-programmed phrase. After you explain your question to the IRS AIA, it would route you to obtain assistance for your question. The IRS AIA is similar to Siri, Google Home, or Alexa, but would be specifically for questions about taxes.

YOUR TAX PREPARER OR TAX SOFTWARE

Some taxpayers currently use either a **tax preparer** or **tax software** to prepare and file their taxes. Taxpayers currently pay for their tax preparer's service or for tax software, such as TurboTax. Some free tax preparation services and software currently exists. In the future, IRS may take steps to enable tax preparers and tax software to deliver additional tax support and services to you that they cannot currently provide. One example that is not currently available is your tax preparer or tax software helping you resolve the notice you received from IRS on your behalf.

VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL WITH AN IRS REPRESENTATIVE

This service is currently available on a limited basis, but the IRS may offer this service to all taxpayers in the future that will make a virtual meeting accessible from your home or any other remote location. You will be able to set up and attend this virual session using devices such as your phone or computer.

AUTHENTICATION METHODS

To access your account or to reach an IRS representative to discuss your tax-related issues, the IRS will require you to verify your identity through the process of authentication. We would like to understand your opinions about each of these authentication methods.

Please note that each method is secure and provides the standard level of protection of your personal information.

QX_1: Please rate each of these authentication methods on the scale below to indicate how easy or difficult it is for you to use each of these methods.
1= Very Difficult, 2= Somewhat difficult 3= Neutral (neither easy nor difficult), 4=Somewhat Easy, 5=Very easy
1. Using only your personal information such as SSN, Date of Birth, or address on tax return
2. Using Knowledge Based Questions that only you may know (e.g. Street you grew up on, mortgage company)
3. Verifying your personal finance information (e.g. credit card or loan numbers)
4. Verifying identity by using a SMS activation code that is sent to your phone via text
5. Verifying using a Postal Activation code that is sent to you via regular mail
6. Uploading a Selfie (a photo) on a single Federal website to verify identity across multiple Federal agencies, including the IRS
7. Uploading driver's license information on a single Federal website to verify identity across multiple Federal agencies, including the IRS

QX_2: Please rank each of these authentication methods based on your preference.
For your most preferred method, please type "1" in the box below, for the second most preferred method type "2", and so on…
1. Using only your personal information such as SSN, Date of Birth, or address on tax return
2. Using Knowledge Based Questions that only you may know (e.g. Street you grew up on, mortgage company)
3. Verifying your personal finance information (e.g. credit card or loan numbers)
4. Verifying identity by using a SMS activation code that is sent to your phone via text
5. Verifying using a Postal Activation code that is sent to you via regular mail
6. Uploading a Selfie (or a recent photo) on a single Federal website to verify identity across multiple Federal agencies, including the IRS
7. Uploading driver's license information on a single Federal website to verify identity across multiple Federal agencies, including the IRS

SERVICE TASK DESCRIPTIONS

Q15. People need help with many issues related to taxes. Please indicate if you ever had the specific service needs listed below. These may or may not have been resolved by IRS in the past.

Responses [ROTATE]:

Yes	No

a. **Have your identity authenticated for identity theft purposes**. For example, provide information or documentation to IRS to prove your identity to obtain an Individual Tax Identification Number or address potential identity theft issues.

b. **Get help with tax law while preparing your return**. For example, get information on withholding, dependents, deductions, or tax credits.

c. **Update your personal information for tax purposes**. For example, update your address after moving or update your name due to a name change.

d. **Fix a mistake on a tax document**. For example, fix a dependent social security number that was entered incorrectly and resulted in the loss of a credit or deduction. Another example is fix a computation error that resulted in overstating deductions.

e. **Make a tax payment**. For example, send payment to the IRS for money you owe for taxes. This includes paying a balance due at filing, quarterly estimated tax payments, or monthly payments for an IRS installment agreement. This does not include setting up an IRS installment agreement.

f. **Check the status of an IRS transaction**. For example, find out how long it will take to receive your tax refund. Another example is checking whether the IRS received a document you sent them.

g. **Get information or assistance about an IRS notice**. For example, find out what to do about a notice or letter you received from the IRS. A notice might say you owe taxes or it might say that an error was made in completing your return.

CREATE DATA ONLY VARIABLES:

SERVICE1=1-7: RANDOMLY SELECT FROM ITEMS MARKED "YES" ABOVE.
SERVICE2=1-7: RANDOMLY SELECT FROM ITEMS MARKED "NO OR SKIP" ABOVE.

IF NO ITEM IS SELECTED "YES", THEN RANDOMLY SELECT TWO AND ASSIGN THEM TO BE "SERVICE1" AND "SERVICE2".

IF NO ITEM IS SELECTED "NO", THEN RANDOMLY SELECT TWO AND ASSIGN THEM TO BE "SERVICE1" AND "SERVICE2".

SERVICE1 AND SERVICE2 TEXT INSERTIONS

SERVICE1/SERVICE2 VALUE (CODES)

1. Have your identity authenticated for identity theft purposes
2. Get help with tax law while preparing your return
3. Update your personal information for tax purposes
4. Fix a mistake in a tax document
5. Make a tax payment
6. Check the status of an IRS transaction
7. Get information or assistance about an IRS notice

TAX ASSISTANCE ATTRIBUTE DESCRIPTIONS

Now we want to explain a number of terms that will be used for the rest of this survey. Some of these will have different meanings depending on how you are getting help.

[DISPLAY]

Q16.Attribute 1: <in bold >Time to access service </in bold >means the time it takes to make a connection with the method you are using to get help, such as reaching a live phone representative or accessing irs.gov. This includes successfully confirming your identity and any required login activities.

Time required does <u>not</u> include the time it takes to find a phone number or website address. It also does <u>not</u> include the time to get your issue resolved after the connection is made.

For IRS local office, it <u>does</u> include the time from scheduling the appointment until your appointment time.

For the purposes of this survey, it can range from 2 minutes to 5 days. Not all times to access service provided in this survey are currently accurate or possible. Some may be possible in the future.

[NEW PAGE]

[DISPLAY]

Q18. Attribute 3: <in bold >Progress toward issue resolution </in bold > means how far you can progress toward completely resolving your service need the first time you use the service channel. Some first contacts may result in the taxpayer's need being fully satisfied, others may require the taxpayer to take additional steps.

The options for progress toward issue resolution are:

1. **Completely resolved**: your service need is completely resolved after the first interaction and no further action is necessary.

2. **Partially resolved**: your service need is partially, but not completely, resolved after the first interaction. Further action is necessary for resolution.

3. **Receive specific information for next step**: you receive information or instructions specific to your situation from the first interaction, but you need to take additional steps beyond this interaction for resolution.

4. **Receive general information for next step**: you only receive general information about your service need during the first interaction. You will need to figure out how it applies to your situation and then take additional steps for resolution

[NEW PAGE]

[DISPLAY]

Q19.Attribute 4: <in bold >Quick Response Assistance Available if Need Unresolved </in bold > means that if you end up being unable to resolve your question or service need in your first interaction with the selected service channel, you will then receive access to a phone number you can call to speak directly with a <u>live</u> trained representative who can provide quick resolution for your issue.

[DISPLAY]

Q20. Attribute 5: <in bold >Confirmation of Service Interaction</in bold > means you will receive a follow-up communication from the IRS, by email, phone, or mail, confirming when the service interaction was completed. For example, a confirmation that a change of address was completed and accepted. Another example is confirmation that your payment was received by the IRS.

[GRID]
[SHOW HEADER AT TOP MIDDLE AND BOTTOM OF SCREEN]
[prompt if skip]

PRACTICE QUESTION

Please answer the following practice question to make sure we are explaining the task clearly.

[Select SERVICE1 VARIABLE CREATED IN Q16]

Q21. Now I'd like to you to assume you need help to [**SERVICE2**]

Assume that you have enough time before taxes are due so that you can use any of the methods of assistance. We are going to ask you some questions to find out which method you would choose.

Imagine that you can phone the Toll-Free line and talk with a live Customer Service Representative for assistance or you can visit the IRS.gov website. Please look at the two options and select the one that you prefer based only on the information provided about each option.

IRS Toll-Free Line, Assisted	IRS.gov website
Access Time 60 minutes	Access Time 10 minutes
*	*

[IF Q21=1]
Q22. You chose the IRS Toll-free line that will take longer to access your representative. Are you sure that you want to pick the Toll-Free option that has a longer access time? Select one answer only

1. Yes, I'm sure that I want to phone an IRS Toll-free number that has a longer access time.
2. No, I'm not sure. Ask the service time question again.

[IF Q22=2]
Q23. Now I'd like to you to assume you need help to [**SERVICE2**].

Assume that you have enough time before taxes are due so that you can use any of the methods of assistance. We are going to ask you some questions to find out which method you would choose.

Imagine that you can phone the Toll-Free line and talk with a live Customer Service Representative for assistance or you can visit the IRS.gov website. Please look at the two options and select the one that you prefer based only on the information provided about each option.

IRS Toll-Free Line, Assisted	IRS.gov website
Access Time 60 minutes	Access Time 10 minutes
*	*

TAX ASSISTANCE CHOICE TASK: <SERVICE1>

[PROMPT IF SKIPPED]
24-33. >.

[FOR Q24 ONLY SHOW:

Now please assume that you need to <in yellow> *[service 1]* </in yellow>

You need help to resolve this issue. Each of the next <u>ten screens</u> will show you three possible methods to resolve this issue, one in each column. Each of the three methods on each screen will have different characteristics. Please compare all three approaches on each characteristic presented and choose the method you MOST prefer on each screen.

Your actual experience will likely differ from the specifics we will show you. Please make your selection based only on the information provided.

There is no right or wrong answer. We are only interested in how you would react to the different approaches and characteristics. We understand that you may not currently use some of these methods. Please consider which ones you WOULD choose based on the attributes even if you don't currently use these methods.

If you don't want to answer a question, you have the option of stopping at any time. An answer is needed to progress through each question in the next section.
[FOR Q24-33 SHOW:
Which of the following three approaches would you <u>MOST</u> prefer to help you <in yellow>[service1] </in yellow>?

[CREATE HYPERLINKS BASED ON Q16 TO Q20]
Click here for descriptions of Tax Assistance Methods
Click each individual attribute below for descriptions

SYSTEM WILL CHOOSE RANDOM LEVELS FOR EACH ATTRIBUTE TO CREATE THE FIRST CONCEPT. SUBSEQUENT CONCEPTS WILL BE CREATED SUCH THAT THE LEVELS ARE NOT REPEATED. IN CASES WHERE THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, THE LEVELS WILL BE REPEATED. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL THE SYSTEM CREATE TWO IDENTICAL PROFILES.

IRS Tax Assistance Method	METHOD B1	METHOD B2	METHOD B3
Time to Access Service			
Progress Toward Issue Resolution			
Quick Response Assistance Available if Need Unresolved			
Confirmation of Service Interaction			
	*	*	*

DO NOT SHOW
EXAMPLE CONJOINT QUESTIONS:
Which of the following three approaches would you <u>MOST</u> prefer to help you update personal information?

IRS Tax Assistance Method	IRS.gov website	Assisted IRS Toll Free Line	IRS Kiosk
Time to Access Service	2 min	60 min	10 min
Progress Toward Issue Resolution	Completely resolved	Partially resolved	Receive general information only
Quick Response Assistance Available if Need Unresolved	No	Yes	Yes
Confirmation of Service Interaction	Yes	No	Yes
	*	*	*

EXAMPLE CONJOINT QUESTIONS:
Which of the following three approaches would you <u>MOST</u> prefer to help you update personal information?

IRS Tax Assistance Method	IRS Local Office	IRS Automated Intelligent Assistant	Your Tax Preparer or Software
Time to Access Service	5 days	5 min	15 min
Progress Toward Issue Resolution	Partially resolved	Completely resolved	Receive general information only
Quick Response Assistance Available if Need Unresolved	Yes	No	Yes
Confirmation of Service Interaction	No	Yes	Yes
	*	*	*

[Total of 10 screens per service need]
[Total of 2 service needs per respondent, see next]

[DISPLAY]

Thanks for those answers. We have just have one more set of choices for you to compare.

[GRID]
[SHOW HEADER AT TOP MIDDLE AND BOTTOM OF SCREEN]
[PROMPT IF SKIP]

TAX ASSISTANCE CHOICE TASK: <SERVICE2>

[DISPLAY]

Now we would like you to imagine that you have a <u>different</u> tax-related issue and you need help to: <in yellow> [service2] </in yellow>.

You will again see ten screens each with three possible methods to resolve this issue on each screen. Again, we understand that you may not currently use some of these methods. Please consider which one you WOULD choose based on the attributes even if you don't currently use these methods.

If you don't want to answer a question, you have the option of stopping at any time. An answer is needed to progress through each question in the next section.

[RADIO]
[CREATE HYPERLINKS BASED ON Q16 TO Q20]
Click here for descriptions of Tax Assistance Methods
Click each individual attribute below for descriptions

SYSTEM WILL CHOOSE RANDOM LEVELS FOR EACH ATTRIBUTE TO CREATE THE FIRST CONCEPT. SUBSEQUENT CONCEPTS WILL BE CREATED SUCH THAT THE LEVELS ARE NOT REPEATED. IN CASES WHERE THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, THE LEVELS WILL BE REPEATED. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL THE SYSTEM CREATE TWO IDENTICAL PROFILES.

34- 43. Which of the following three approaches would you <u>MOST</u> prefer to help you <in yellow>"[service2]"</in yellow>?

IRS Tax Assistance Method	METHOD B1	METHOD B2	METHOD B3
Time to Access Service			
Progress Toward Issue Resolution			
Quick Response Assistance Available if Need Unresolved			
Confirmation of Service Interaction			
	*	*	*

[FOR ASSISTANCE METHODS 2-5 ABOVE RANDOMLY SELECT ONE OF THE LEVELS FROM THE CORRESPONDING EXCEL SHEET]
[FOR ASSISTANCE METHOD #1, TIME TO ACCESS, SELECT ONE OF THE THREE LEVELS FROM THE TIME REQUIRED TABLE <u>BASED ON THE METHOD THAT IS SHOWN</u>]

_____

Thank you for your responses.

[TEXT BOX]
Q44. Do you have any final comments about how the IRS could improve its service to you?

[DISPLAY]
You have reached the end of the survey. Thank you for participating in this research.
Your feedback is very valuable.