

Volume 2

TAS RESEARCH AND RELATED STUDIES

## Low Income Taxpayer Clinic Program:

A Look at Those Eligible to  
Seek Help From the Clinics

# LOW INCOME TAXPAYER CLINIC PROGRAM: A Look at Those Eligible to Seek Help From the Clinics

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## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

The Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) Program provides tax representation or advice to low income individuals who need help resolving issues with their federal income tax returns. The program awards matching grants to qualifying organizations to operate clinics that represent low income taxpayers in disputes with the IRS and educates those for whom English is a second language (ESL) about their rights and responsibilities as U.S. taxpayers.<sup>2</sup> LITCs provide services to taxpayers for free or for no more than a nominal fee.<sup>3</sup>

Low Income Taxpayer Clinics were established to assure that low income taxpayers have access to justice and are treated fairly. LITCs achieve this goal by providing *pro bono* representation to taxpayers in tax disputes with the IRS, educating low income and ESL taxpayers about their rights and responsibilities, and identifying and advocating for solutions to systemic issues that affect these taxpayers.<sup>4</sup> Thus, LITCs are central to the realization of two important taxpayer rights: the *right to retain representation* and the *right to a fair and just tax system*.<sup>5</sup>

## BACKGROUND

Tax clinics began in the mid-1970s when several law schools established clinical programs for students interested in tax practice.<sup>6</sup> By 1990, tax clinics operated at 18 academic institutions, including the University of Denver, Loyola University (Chicago) School of Law, University of Minnesota School of Law, University of New Mexico School of Law, University of Bridgeport (now Quinnipiac University School of Law), and American University Washington College of Law, all of which continue to participate in the LITC Program.<sup>7</sup> In 1992, The Community Tax Law Project of Richmond, Virginia became the first independent (*i.e.*, nonacademic) tax clinic in the nation.<sup>8</sup>

Congress held numerous hearings about IRS policies and actions in 1997 and 1998, leading up to the enactment of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 (RRA 98).<sup>9</sup> During those hearings, Congress learned about the work of clinics providing controversy representation to low income taxpayers and how such efforts assisted not only those directly represented but also the low income taxpayer community at large, by bringing to light systemic issues affecting many taxpayers and advocating for a fair and just resolution of these issues.<sup>10</sup>

Congress adopted several provisions in RRA 98 that helped low income taxpayers. Most important to the expansion of free or low-cost tax controversy assistance was the implementation of IRC § 7526, which

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1 The principal authors of this study are Jeff Wilson and Carol Hatch, TAS Research and Analysis.

2 See Internal Revenue Code (IRC) § 7526(b)(1)(A)(ii).

3 See IRC § 7526(b)(1)(A)(i).

4 IRS Publication 3319, *2015 Grant Application Package and Guidelines 1* (May 2014).

5 The IRS adopted the Taxpayer Bill of Rights on June 10, 2014. See IRS, Taxpayer Bill of Rights, available at <http://www.irs.gov/Taxpayer-Bill-of-Rights>. See also IRS, Publication 1, *Your Rights as a Taxpayer* (2014).

6 Keith Fogg, *History of Low-Income Taxpayer Clinics*, 67 *Tax Law.* 1 (2014).

7 *Id.* at 20 fn. 65.

8 *Id.* at 23.

9 Pub. L. No. 105-206, 112 Stat. 685 (1998).

10 See, e.g., *Hearing on the Recommendations of the National Committee on Restructuring the IRS on Taxpayer Protections and Rights: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Ways and Means, Subcomm. on Oversight*, 105th Cong. 145-57 (Sept. 26, 1997) (statement of Nina E. Olson, Executive Director, The Community Tax Law Project); *IRS Restructuring: Hearing Before the S. Comm. on Finance*, 105th Cong. 124-26 (Feb. 5, 1998) (statement of Nina E. Olson, Executive Director, The Community Tax Law Project).

authorized matching grants for the program of up to \$6 million per year unless otherwise provided by specific appropriation. With annual appropriations available, qualified organizations could be awarded up to \$100,000 per year to develop, expand, or continue an LITC.<sup>11</sup>

Since 1999, Congress has appropriated funds annually to provide matching grants to organizations that operate LITCs. In the ensuing years, the program has experienced significant growth in the number of clinics operated, the amount of funds awarded, and the geographic areas covered. In its initial year (1999), the IRS awarded grants totaling less than \$1.5 million to 34 entities in 18 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>12</sup> In 2014, the IRS awarded nearly \$10 million to 131 grantees in 47 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, during the same period, the average grant award rose from slightly more than \$44,000 to nearly \$75,000. Because the grant program requires a dollar-for-dollar match in funding from the recipient, the total program resources (grant plus match) available to each LITC has thus increased from an average of \$88,000 to \$150,000.

### Who Are LITC Clients?

IRC § 7526(b)(1)(B)(i) requires that at least 90 percent of the taxpayers represented by an LITC must have incomes that do not exceed 250 percent of the federal poverty level.<sup>14</sup> The table below shows the LITC income guidelines for 2014.

**FIGURE 1, 2014 LITC income guidelines (250% of Federal Poverty Level)<sup>15</sup>**

Size of Family Unit	48 Contiguous States, D.C., and Puerto Rico	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$29,175	\$36,450	\$33,550
2	\$39,325	\$49,150	\$45,225
3	\$49,475	\$61,850	\$56,900
4	\$59,625	\$74,550	\$68,575
5	\$69,775	\$87,250	\$80,250
6	\$79,925	\$99,950	\$91,925
7	\$90,075	\$112,650	\$103,600
8	\$100,225	\$125,350	\$115,275
Add, for each additional person	\$10,150	\$12,700	\$11,675

The number of low income people in the United States has grown in recent years. In 2013, nearly 133 million people had incomes below 250 percent of the federal poverty level, an increase of nearly 16

11 IRC § 7526(c)(2).

12 IR-1999-63, *IRS Encourages Growth of Low-Income Taxpayer Clinics with \$1.5 Million in Grants* (July 14, 1999).

13 The IRS publishes Publication 4134, *Low Income Taxpayer Clinic List*, on an annual basis. It identifies the organizations receiving a grant that year, and contains contact information and details regarding the types of services each clinic provides. The publication lists 133 clinics; however, two subsequently withdrew from the program.

14 The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services publishes poverty guidelines in the Federal Register each year, which the LITC program uses to establish the 250 percent of the federal poverty level for purposes of determining a taxpayer's eligibility for LITC representation. For 2014, see 79 F.R. 3593 (Jan. 22, 2014).

15 *Id.*

million since 2007. The percentage of persons below the 250 percent threshold similarly rose from 39.2 percent to 42.5 percent over the same period.<sup>16</sup>

### What Does it Mean to Be Low Income?

Low income taxpayers work in a variety of professions, in all lifestyles. Analysis of data from the 2012 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey revealed the most common occupations for low income workers (making less than \$48,000 per year) include nurses, retail clerks, truck drivers, office workers, janitors, cooks, managers, teachers, cashiers, accountants and bookkeepers, customer service representatives, laborers, housekeepers, and child care providers.<sup>17</sup> LITC clients include retirees or disabled individuals who live on fixed incomes. Some work in the cash economy and do not receive a Form W-2 (*Wage and Tax Statement*) or Form 1099-MISC (*Miscellaneous Income*) they can use to verify their incomes. Others are immigrants who have never before had to file a U.S. tax return.

Like the general taxpayer population, low income individuals possess diverse characteristics in ethnicity, family status, living arrangements, and age.<sup>18</sup> However, the defining trait of this population—scarcity of financial resources—brings with it a myriad of hardships that present distinctive challenges for tax administration.<sup>19</sup> Low income taxpayers are more likely to face:

- Limited English proficiency (LEP);
- Low literacy rates;
- Physical or mental disabilities;
- Lower education levels;
- Unstable job prospects;
- Substandard housing situations;
- Lack of affordable child care;
- Unreliable transportation;
- Limited access to banks; or
- Lack of access to competent and affordable tax return preparation services.<sup>20</sup>

Many low income taxpayers speak English as a second language (ESL) or not at all. Without access to services in a language they understand, these taxpayers cannot obtain representation and consultation services, understand and exercise important rights, or comply with their responsibilities.

The National Taxpayer Advocate, who oversees and administers the LITC program for the IRS, commissioned a study with Russell Research to better understand the needs and circumstances of taxpayers

16 U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, *Age and Sex of All People, Family Members and Unrelated Individuals Iterated by Income-to-Poverty Ratio and Race, Below 250% of Poverty*, (2013 and 2007 poverty data, available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/incpovhlth/2013/index.html>).

17 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014 available at <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>. NPR, *The Most Common Jobs for the Rich, Middle Class and Poor* available at <http://www.npr.org/blogs/money/2014/10/16/356176018/the-most-popular-jobs-for-the-rich-middle-class-and-poor> (Oct. 16, 2014). The sample was restricted to adults ages 25 to 65 and who worked at least three months in the last year, and was based on individual income from wages and salaries.

18 National Taxpayer Advocate 2011 Annual Report to Congress 273 (Introduction to Diversity Issues: *The IRS Should Do More to Accommodate Changing Taxpayer Demographics*).

19 National Taxpayer Advocate 2009 Annual Report to Congress 112-13 (Most Serious Problem: *Beyond EITC: The Needs of Low Income Taxpayers Are Not Being Adequately Met*).

20 *Id.*

eligible to use the clinics. This telephone survey of both cell phone and landline users included more than 1,100 individuals, gathered information on eligible taxpayers' awareness and use of LITC services, the types of issues for which they would consider using clinic services, and other items including demographic information.<sup>21</sup>

## RESEARCH STUDY

TAS's Research and Analysis staff developed a study to learn more about taxpayers who meet the eligibility requirements for LITC use. TAS decided a telephone survey was the best way to reach the target population and contracted with a vendor to review, revise (as needed), administer the survey, and summarize the results.

### Methodology

TAS worked with Russell Research to conduct a telephone survey of taxpayers eligible to use an LITC for help with a federal tax problem. To ensure coverage of the LITC-eligible population, this Random Digit Dialed (RDD) survey included both landline and cell phone numbers. Russell completed 1,143 surveys among a random sample of LITC-eligible taxpayers, including 204 Spanish-speakers. The survey was conducted from February 24–June 3, 2014. Weighting was applied to the data for respondents in the sample to reflect the true national representation of the LITC-eligible universe of taxpayers aged 18 or older, based on household size, geographic region, and age.<sup>22</sup>

**Eligibility requirements:** To qualify as LITC-eligible Taxpayers, respondents had to be the person in the household responsible for handling federal income tax matters. Participants must have filed a federal return in the past three years, and had to have total annual household income not to exceed 250 percent of the federal poverty level.

**Study limitations:** The survey was originally scheduled for 2013, with household income limits established accordingly. The survey administration was delayed; however, the eligibility tables were not updated to reflect the 2014 income requirements, so eligibles were held to more stringent income levels than needed in 2014.<sup>23</sup>

The study was limited to those who had filed a tax return within the last three years, although LITCs can represent non-filers. This approach was adopted in part to make sure participants had some fairly recent experience with the tax system and might have a need for assistance with federal tax related issues. However, by limiting the study to participants who had filed within the last three years, the non-filing population was excluded.

Spanish speakers may have been underrepresented in the initial survey. To ensure sufficient sample size, we augmented the survey with an additional 143 Spanish speakers so we can report the findings separately when significant differences exist.

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21 This Random Digit Dialed (RDD) telephone survey, utilized both cell phone numbers and landline numbers to reach participants. This approach was used to make sure all groups of the LITC -eligibles were represented in the survey.

22 *Id.* Survey results generally have margins of error of +/- 2.9 percent for all eligibles and +/- 6.9 percent for Spanish speakers at the 95 percent confidence level. Some statistics are based on a smaller sample size and have higher margins of error.

23 2013 income thresholds for LITC use started at levels \$450 less than 2014 levels for households with one person, with differences increasing by about \$100 per additional family member. 2013 income criteria for LITC use are found in the survey instrument within Russell Research, *Topline Findings From A Taxpayer Advocate Service Survey Of Taxpayers Who Are Eligible To Use IRS's Low Income Taxpayer Clinics (LITC)*, June 2014.

## Study Objectives

This study was developed with the goal of learning more about taxpayers who are eligible for help from LITCs. First, TAS wanted to know if taxpayers are aware of these clinics and what issues lead them to seek LITC help. TAS sought additional information about personal tax situations such whether the taxpayer used a preparer, received correspondence from the IRS, and how the individual responded to IRS letters. The survey also gathered information about participants' home technology capabilities and how they preferred to work with LITCs.

## FINDINGS

### What Are the Characteristics of Those Eligible for Help from LITCs?

Information about the tax-related behaviors and situations of LITC-eligible taxpayers will inform TAS and LITCs about the services that would most help this population. The basic information collected will allow LITCs to tailor program offerings to meet participants' needs. Please see the Appendix for a detailed breakout of the demographic characteristics of the LITC-eligibles.

**Preparer Use:** About half of all LITC-eligibles hired a tax preparer to complete their federal tax return, as did 75 percent of Spanish speakers. Spanish speakers were also more likely to say they use a preparer or representative to contact the IRS on their behalf. Nearly 95 percent of all eligibles stated they had *not* used someone to represent them before the IRS, but ten percent of the Spanish speaking eligibles replied that someone had represented them before the IRS.

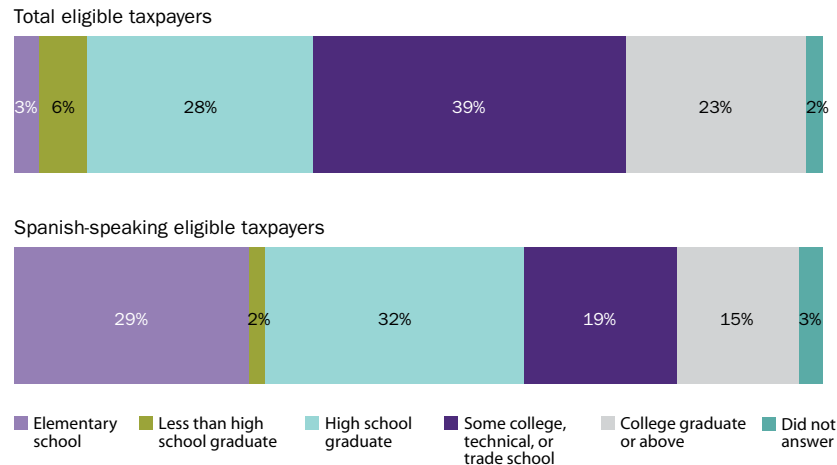
**Tax Refunds and Banking:** More than 90 percent of the eligibles received a refund—mainly by direct deposit. Overall, about 85 percent of all eligibles reported having a personal bank account whereas 78 percent of Spanish speakers reported having one.

**Language:** More than 90 percent of all respondents stated they prefer to discuss their taxes in English, compared to about 20 percent of Spanish speakers. Over 75 percent of Spanish Speakers report that they prefer speaking Spanish during tax discussions.

**Education:** Demographically, a majority of all eligibles have some college experience. There are differences in this measure by total vs. Spanish speaking, with Spanish speakers having considerably lower education levels overall. For instance, over 30 percent of Spanish speakers' highest level of education was less than a high school degree, with 29 percent reporting only an Elementary school education, compared to less than ten percent of the total eligible (only three percent reporting just an Elementary school education). Conversely, over half of all eligibles attended at least some college courses as compared with less than 30 percent of Spanish speakers.

FIGURE 2<sup>24</sup>

Educational attainment of LITC eligibles



**Disability:** Overall, about one-fifth of all eligibles reported having a long-term disability. However, Spanish speakers indicated considerably lower disability levels with only ten percent having a long-term disability condition.

**Are Eligible Taxpayers Aware that LITCs are Available to help them?**

In order to use the services of an LITC, eligible taxpayers must be aware of the clinics’ existence and what services are available. The survey collected information about taxpayers’ knowledge of LITCs and what approach would be best-suited to spread information about the clinics.

**Awareness of LITCs:** Only about 30 percent of all eligibles were aware of an organization outside the IRS that helps taxpayers with IRS problems. Among those aware, only about ten percent knew the name of the organization is “Low Income Taxpayer Clinic.” The main sources of awareness of the outside organization were TV, word-of-mouth, and radio. Since very few LITCs advertise on TV, it is likely that eligible taxpayers were confusing for-profit tax resolution firms with LITCs.

After they were read a description of the LITCs, nearly five percent of all eligibles said they had contacted a clinic at one time or another. Over ten percent of Spanish speakers reported they had used a clinic. Conversely, about 95 percent of all eligibles and nearly 90 percent of Spanish speakers have not previously used the services of a clinic.

**Use of LITCs:** About two of every three LITC eligibles stated they were likely or very likely to use an LITC if they had a need for its services and they would use the LITC for a wide variety of services such as account notices or issues, or help with Appeals or court issues.

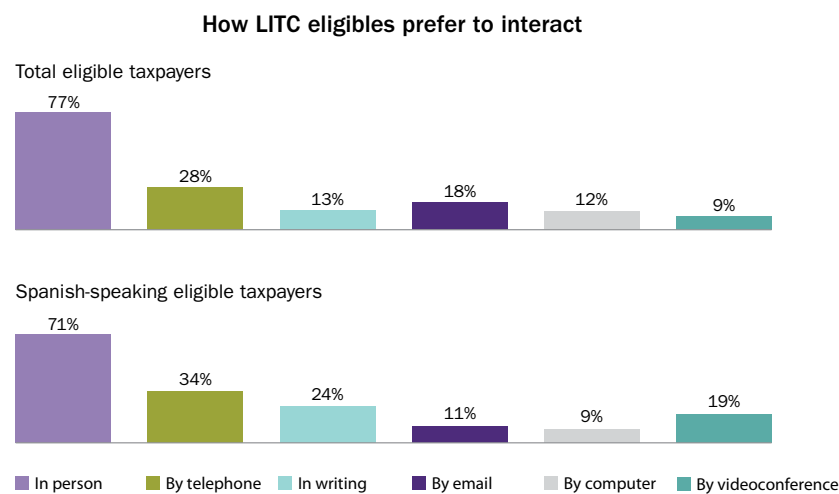
Virtually all eligibles indicated that LITCs should be advertised, and in a variety of media—led by TV, radio, posters, direct mail, and online.

24 Russell Research, *Topline Findings From A Taxpayer Advocate Service Survey Of Taxpayers Who Are Eligible To Use IRS’s Low Income Taxpayer Clinics (LITC)*, June 2014.



**Interactions with LITCs:** LITCs need to be accessible to encourage use among eligibles. Participants indicated they were willing to travel 20-30 minutes to a clinic. The survey asked about eligible taxpayers' technological capabilities, comfort, and preferences for discussing taxes and interacting with an LTC. Both in-person meetings and meetings at a community services center were preferred by over 75 percent of all eligibles. Only about ten percent of all eligible taxpayers were willing to interact by computer, while nearly ten percent stated they prefer videoconferencing. Spanish speakers were twice as willing as the total group to videoconference. Overall, less than one in five of all eligible taxpayers were willing to communicate by email.

**FIGURE 3**<sup>25</sup>



### Types of Tax Issues Facing Eligibles

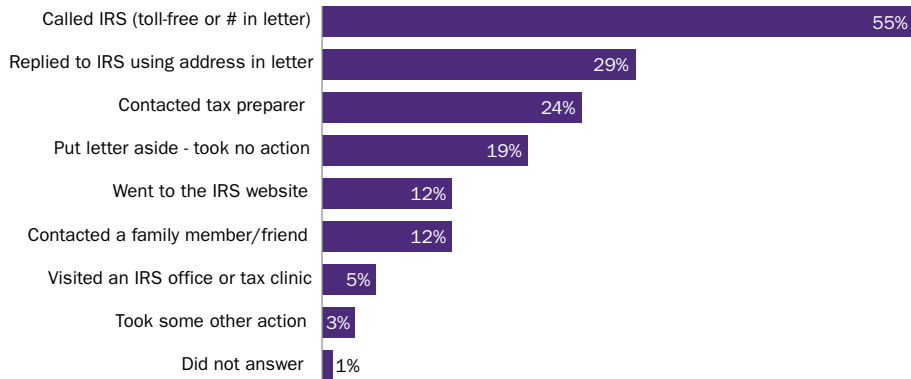
**Received letter or notice within the last three years and what actions were taken in response to the notice:** Almost 15 percent of the eligibles stated they had received a notice from the IRS within the last three years. Most said they reacted by responding to the letter/notice with a letter or phone call to the IRS or to their tax advisor or other professional advisor. About one of every five who received a letter from the IRS reported taking no action in response. Although the sample was small for this segment, none of the Spanish speakers who received a notice reported visiting the IRS website, compared to 12 percent of the total eligible.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Participants were allowed more than one response so numbers total to more than 100 percent.

<sup>26</sup> A total of 153 eligibles answered the question on actions taken, compared to only 31 Spanish speakers. Findings are not broken out for Spanish speakers due to the small number of responses to this question.

FIGURE 4<sup>27</sup>

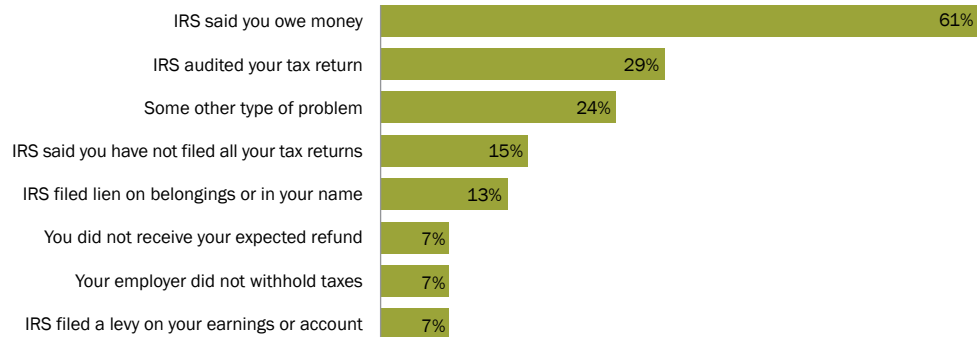
All LITC eligibles' actions taken in response to IRS notice



**What kind of problem did they have with the IRS?** About ten percent reported a problem related to filing/payment of taxes, with most involving taxes owed. Eligibles indicated the problems were a mix of recent and older issues and most of the time involved the IRS saying they owed money.

FIGURE 5<sup>28</sup>

Tax problems experienced by all eligibles reporting problems



27 Russell Research, *Topline Findings From A Taxpayer Advocate Service Survey Of Taxpayers Who Are Eligible To Use IRS's Low Income Taxpayer Clinics (LITC)*, June 2014. Taxpayers were allowed multiple responses. Some categories were combined for display purposes.

28 Responses are shown for 108 of the total eligibles and they total to more than 100 percent because participants were allowed more than one response. Only 20 Spanish speakers answered this question so they are not shown in the graph. The most frequently cited problem for Spanish speakers were related to not receiving their expected tax refund.

**Refunds:** About 20 percent of respondents stated someone took part or all of their tax refunds (12 percent of Spanish speakers). Either a tax preparer kept part of the refund to cover their preparation costs or the IRS kept funds either for tax liabilities, or to pay other items such as child support, student loans, Social Security overpayments, or other federal debts.<sup>29</sup>

### Significance of Findings for IRS Taxpayer Service Available to Vulnerable Taxpayers

The survey findings demonstrate that the low-income population is vulnerable and more likely than the population at large to be taken advantage of by unskilled or unscrupulous preparers. For example, over 15 percent of those relying on a tax preparer either did not receive a copy of their return or the preparer did not sign their tax return.<sup>30</sup> In other words, for nearly one in six low income taxpayers who used preparers, their preparers did not follow the basic statutory requirements established for commercial tax preparation.<sup>31</sup>

Additionally, the National Taxpayer Advocate continues to harbor concern about the IRS's future direction for taxpayer services, primarily that the IRS will make service-related policy decisions that will leave this vulnerable population behind. For example, as the IRS moves away from traditional in-person services such as live telephone assistance or face-to-face interactions at Taxpayer Assistance Centers, some groups of taxpayers will be impacted more than others.<sup>32</sup> Taxpayers who have viable service alternatives, or do not rely on the IRS for help, will experience minimal impediments in meeting their tax obligations. However, those who do rely on the IRS may have difficulty or be unable to move to new technologies and service channels.<sup>33</sup>

The LITC Survey findings and other studies show that technology adoption and use are not the same across income or education levels, age groups, and several other factors. Pew Research Center devotes considerable resources to measuring the adoption and impact of technologies on various groups throughout America. Some pertinent information follows.

### General Adult Internet Use

In 2013, approximately 15 percent of American adults did not use the internet or email ("offline"). The following shows the categories with the highest *offline* rates:<sup>34</sup>

- Senior citizens (aged 65+): 44 percent offline;
- Adults with less than a high school education: 41 percent offline;
- Adults with high school diploma: 22 percent offline;

29 An offset occurs when the IRS takes part or all of a refund to satisfy the taxpayer's delinquent tax liabilities from other tax years. The IRS also uses taxpayer refunds to satisfy debts from other agencies (e.g., child support delinquencies).

30 Over 30 percent of Spanish speakers reported they either did not receive a copy of their return or their preparer did not sign the return.

31 IRC § 6695(a), (b).

32 For a discussion of the impact of a declining IRS budget on taxpayer service, see *Most Serious Problem: TAXPAYER SERVICE: Taxpayer Service Has Reached Unacceptably Low Levels and Is Getting Worse, Creating Compliance Barriers and Significant Inconvenience for Millions of Taxpayers*, *supra*.

33 For a discussion of the impact of a declining IRS budget on taxpayer service offerings and delivery channels, see *Most Serious Problem: TAXPAYER SERVICE: Due to the Delayed Completion of the Service Priorities Initiative, the IRS Currently Lacks a Clear Rationale for Taxpayer Service Budgetary Allocation Decisions*, *supra*.

34 Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, *Who's Not Online and Why?* (Sept. 2013) (Phone survey conducted in 2013); see also Pew Research Center, *Older Adults and Technology Use: Adoption is Increasing, but Many Seniors Remain Isolated from Digital Life* (April 2014) (Phone survey conducted in 2013) (Found offline rate of 41% for those aged 65+).

- Living in households earning less than \$30,000 per year: 24 percent offline;
- Living in rural areas: 20 percent offline;
- Hispanics: 24 percent offline; and
- Twenty percent of African Americans aged 18 and older do not go online, rising to 25 percent if household income is less than \$30,000 and to 37 percent for those with no high school diploma.<sup>35</sup>

It is not simply enough to consider how many taxpayers use technology based services; we must also consider what activities they are willing to conduct online. Taxpayers may consider electronic interactions with the IRS similar to financial transactions. Forrester Research surveyed individuals as to the types of activities they undertake online. The survey itself was administered online, so the responses may not be generalizable to all taxpayers or to low income taxpayers, but it does give a sense of what activities online users are willing to conduct.

*Use of Devices for Certain Tasks<sup>36</sup>*

The 2014 *online* survey by Forrester Research found interesting data about the use of certain devices to conduct certain transactions online. Because this survey was conducted online, the usage rates may be higher than the general population.

**FIGURE 6, Individuals’ technology use by activity and household income<sup>37</sup>**

Activities	Segment (individuals reporting)	Check financial statements online	Pay bills online	Transfer money between personal accounts	Search for government services & policies
Use PC or Laptop	<b>National Average</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>19%</b>
	Household Income under \$20,000	48%	49%	28%	18%
	Household Income \$20,000 - \$29,999	57%	59%	36%	20%
	Household Income \$30,000 - \$49,999	58%	63%	38%	18%
Use Personal Tablet	<b>National Average</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>11%</b>
	Household Income under \$20,000	22%	16%	13%	11%
	Household Income \$20,000 - \$29,999	26%	19%	17%	11%
	Household Income \$30,000 - \$49,999	25%	20%	15%	8%

35 Pew Research Center’s Internet Project July 18 to September 30 Tracking Survey, *African Americans and Technology Use A Demographic Portrait* (Jan. 2014).

36 Forrester, *North American Consumer Technographics Online Benchmark Survey (Part 2)*, 2014.

37 *Id.*

Activities	Segment (individuals reporting)	Check financial statements online	Pay bills online	Transfer money between personal accounts	Search for government services & policies
Use Mobile Phone	National Average	21%	13%	13%	4%
	Household Income under \$20,000	16%	10%	10%	4%
	Household Income \$20,000 - \$29,999	19%	14%	13%	5%
	Household Income \$30,000 - \$49,999	20%	13%	12%	4%

\* Forrester, *North American Consumer Technographics Online Benchmark Survey (Part 2)* (2014)

Some noteworthy findings from Forrester's study include:

- On average, only 19 percent of adults search for government services and policies with a PC or laptop. This rate drops to 11 percent when using personal tablets and even lower to four percent when using a mobile phone.
- With very few exceptions, the lower income brackets used all the devices less than the national average to conduct financial transactions online.
- On average, 21 percent of adults use their mobile phones to check financial statements. Only 13 percent use their mobile phones to pay bills or transfer money between accounts.

Other potential obstacles to technology-based services relate to security. Although technology usage tends to increase over time across the board, there are certain types of activities that may be impacted by reported security breaches. The prevalence of identity theft and security breaches in the business sector will ultimately influence taxpayers' behaviors and willingness to conduct certain activities online. While we do not have data to show the impact, incidents such as the Target, Home Depot, and Sony data thefts are likely to affect technology usage across many fields and not just credit card usage.<sup>38</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Low Income Taxpayer Clinics offer qualified taxpayers some alternatives to paid representatives. Consequently, it is important to assure taxpayers are aware of the clinics so they know the options if and when they need help resolving tax issues. About 15 percent of the survey participants reported receiving a letter from the IRS in the last three years. This high rate of IRS contact indicates that these taxpayers have a great need for LITC assistance.<sup>39</sup>

Since less than one in three survey participants were aware of an organization outside the IRS that helps taxpayers with IRS problems, and only about ten percent of those knew the LITC name, most of this

38 See, e.g. Robert J Samuelson, *An Ominous Hack*, Wash. Post, Dec. 22, 2014, at A19. *Target Data Breach Spilled Info On As Many As 70 Million Customers*, FORBES, Jan. 10, 2014, available at <http://www.forbes.com/sites/maggiemcgrath/2014/01/10/target-data-breach-spilled-info-on-as-many-as-70-million-customers/> (last visited Dec. 22, 2014). Press Release, Home Depot, *The Home Depot Reports Findings in Payment Data Breach Investigation*, (November 6, 2014) available at <https://corporate.homedepot.com/MediaCenter/Documents/Press%20Release.pdf> (last visited Dec. 22, 2014). Jethro Mullen, *North Korea and the Sony Hack: The War of Words Escalates*, CNN, Dec. 22, 2014 available at <http://www.cnn.com/2014/12/22/world/asia/north-korea-us-sony-hack-who-says-what/index.html> (last visited Dec. 22, 2014).

39 Compliance Data Warehouse (CDW), *Individual Returns Transaction File*. About ten million LITC-eligible taxpayers received a letter from the IRS in the last three years and thus may have a need for clinic services.

population is not familiar with the clinics and would not know of their services. In other words, increasing awareness of LITCs is paramount. Once eligibles are aware of the LITCs, the clinics need to be structured and located such that those needing assistance can use them. This means being within about 30 minutes commuting time and making services available in Spanish since three in four Spanish speakers expressed a desire to discuss their tax matters in Spanish.

Given all of the existing and evolving technologies and their associated challenges, it is important for the IRS to consider the impact of changes to its service offerings on different groups of taxpayers, particularly those with fewer options for help meeting their federal income tax obligations. Studies show preferences for services and delivery methods differ by various service users. LITCs need to know their clients' preferred communication mediums and service needs to effectively help their clients and those eligible for their services. As the IRS reduces the amount and kinds of in-person help available to taxpayers, the Low Income Taxpayer Clinics will likely become a more important mechanism for vulnerable taxpayers seeking help with their tax situations.

## Appendix

### Participants' demographic characteristics<sup>40</sup>

Characteristic <i>Total Respondents (Base)</i>	Total Eligible Taxpayers <i>(1,000)</i>	Spanish-Speaking Eligible Taxpayers <i>(204)</i>
<b>Preferred Language for Tax Discussions</b>		
English	93%	21%
Spanish	6%	78%
Some other language	1%	1%
<b>Education Level</b>		
Elementary school	3%	29%
Some high school	6%	2%
High school graduate	28%	32%
Technical, trade or business school	8%	6%
Some college	31%	13%
College graduate	18%	12%
Post-graduate work	5%	3%
Prefer not to answer	2%	3%
<b>Disability</b>		
Have a long-term disability condition(s)	22%	10%
No long-term disability conditions	75%	89%
Prefer not to answer	3%	1%
<b>Personal Bank Account</b>		
Yes, have personal bank account	85%	78%
No, do not have personal bank account	13%	22%
Not sure	0%	0%
Prefer not to answer	2%	0%
<b>Refund</b>		
Got a refund	92%	93%
Did not get a refund	6%	7%
Not sure	1%	0%
Prefer not to answer	1%	0%

<sup>40</sup> Spanish speaking individuals include 61 who are part of the Total Eligibles. Numbers may not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

OMB # 1545-1432



**TAS's LITC User Survey  
SCREENER**

RUSSELL # 13-04-134  
February 2014  
PAGE 1 (C1)

**RESPONDENT INFO**

PARTICIPANT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**QUOTAS:**

**Total Random Sample** ..... n=1,000 ...09  
**Spanish-Speaking Augments (50-60 from Random Sample)** ..... n=140-150

- **THE SAMPLE MUST BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE POPULATION OF POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE AT OR BELOW 250% OF THE FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL. CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS SAMPLE WILL BE PROVIDED BY TAS.**
- **THE SAMPLE WILL BE A RDD SAMPLE AND WILL BE REPRESENTATIVE OF BOTH LAND LINE AND CELL PHONE NUMBERS.**
- **WITH THE 1,000 RANDOM SAMPLE, RUSSELL IS EXPECTING TO END WITH APPROXIMATELY 50-60 SPANISH-SPEAKING RESPONDENTS IN THE RANDOM SAMPLE – AN AUGMENT OF APPROXIMATELY 140-150 SPANISH-SPEAKING RESPONDENTS WILL BE COLLECTED TO BRING THIS QUOTA UP TO n=200.**
- **RUSSELL WILL PROVIDE A TRANSLATED SPANISH-LANGUAGE QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE USED WITH SPANISH-SPEAKING RESPONDENTS.**
- **TAB: RUSSELL WILL PROVIDE TAS WITH A DATASET IN SPSS OR SAS FORMAT WITH ALL SURVEY RESPONSES.**

**RECORD DATE, TIME & DISPOSITION FOR EACH ATTEMPT AT SCREENING/RECRUITING THIS PERSON.**

				Disc	NA	Unavail	Ref	NQ	Comp	
1	DATE: _____	TIME: _____	(am) (pm) .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	...10
2	DATE: _____	TIME: _____	(am) (pm) .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	...11
3	DATE: _____	TIME: _____	(am) (pm) .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	...12
4	DATE: _____	TIME: _____	(am) (pm) .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	...13
5	DATE: _____	TIME: _____	(am) (pm) .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	...14
6	DATE: _____	TIME: _____	(am) (pm) .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	...15
7	DATE: _____	TIME: _____	(am) (pm) .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	...16
8	DATE: _____	TIME: _____	(am) (pm) .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	...17
9	DATE: _____	TIME: _____	(am) (pm) .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	...18
10	DATE: _____	TIME: _____	(am) (pm) .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	...19

INTERVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_

THE RDD SAMPLE LISTS WILL BE DRAWN TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF POPULATION OF BOTH LAND LINE AND CELL PHONES NUMBERS. AFTER REACHING A POTENTIAL PARTICIPANT, INTRODUCE YOURSELF WITH: **Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ of Russell Research in New York, an independent national research firm. The Internal Revenue Service wants Taxpayers' feedback on specific IRS services, and has asked us to survey Taxpayers and get your ideas on some of these services. Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and your responses will be kept strictly private to the extent allowed by law and never revealed to anyone – including the IRS. The survey should take about 20 minutes to complete and we'd appreciate your participation. (IF ANY HESITATION, READ...) If you have any concerns about talking to us in this survey, please log onto irs.gov and search "market research", where you'll see examples of the survey work Russell Research has conducted for the IRS over the past 15 years.**

**OMB REQUIRES A FOLLOW-UP SUMMARY OF THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS, COMPLETE WITH TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS SCREENED, TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS ASKED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SURVEY, TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS WHO AGREED TO TAKE SURVEY, FINAL RESPONSE RATES, AND BURDEN HOURS USED – SEPARATELY FOR THE SCREENING SECTION AND THE MAIN SURVEY. THIS INFORMATION WILL BE PROVIDED TO TAS AT THE COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT.**



SCREENER PAGE 2

**(IF AGREEABLE, CONTINUE...)** We are required by law to provide you the Office Of Management and Budget Control Number for this information request. That number is 1545-1432. In addition, if you have any comments about the time estimate to complete the survey or ways to improve the survey, you can write to the IRS. Would you like the address? **(IF YES, ADDRESS IS...)** IRS Tax Products Coordinating Committee, SE:W:CAR:MP:T:T:SP, 1111 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20224. Are you willing to participate in the survey?

- >> **IF "YES", CONTINUE w/Q1 – UNLESS YOU SENSE RESPONDENT SPEAKS MAINLY SPANISH, IN WHICH CASE, ASK RESPONDENT TO HOLD WHILE YOU TRANSFER TO A SPANISH-SPEAKING INTERVIEWER, WHO WILL ASK WHICH LANGUAGE THEY PREFER TO BE INTERVIEWED IN.**
- >> **IF "NO"/REFUSED, THANK & RECORD AS "Ref" FOR THIS ATTEMPT IN BOX ON COVER PAGE AND THEN MOVE THIS RESPONDENT INTO THE RE-CONTACT CATEGORY FOR FOLLOWUP ON REFUSALS.**

**S1. For the record, are you male or female? (RECORD ANSWER BELOW.)**

**GENDER SPLITS/SKEWS WILL BE DEVELOPED BY TAS AS IT DEVELOPS DATA FOR ITS LISTS. IF NEEDED, SAMPLE CAN BE QUOTA'D.**

Male..... 1 ...20  
 Female..... 2

>> **IF QUOTAS & OVER QUOTA, THANK, TERM & TALLY BELOW. OTHERWISE, CONTINUE.**

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**S2. And which of the following age categories includes your age? (READ CHOICES AS SHOWN BELOW & RECORD ANSWER.)**

**AGE DISTRIBUTION OF TARGET AUDIENCE WILL BE DEVELOPED BY TAS AS IT DEVELOPS LISTS. IF NEEDED, SAMPLE CAN BE QUOTA'D.**

Under 18 ..... 1 ...21  
 18 to 24 ..... 2  
 25 to 34 ..... 3  
 35 to 44 ..... 4  
 45 to 54 ..... 5  
 55 to 64 ..... 6  
 65 or Older..... 7  
**(DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer (TERMINATE)**

>> **IF QUOTAS & OVER QUOTA OR IF RESPONDENT PREFERS NOT TO ANSWER, THEN THANK, TERM & TALLY BELOW. OTHERWISE, CONTINUE WITH THE NEXT SCREENING QUESTION.**

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**S3. Are you the person responsible for handling Federal Income Tax matters in your household? (RECORD ONE ANSWER.)**

Yes (CONTINUE)..... 1 ...22  
 No (ASK TO SPEAK WITH PERSON IN HH WHO DOES HANDLE TAX MATTERS)..... 2  
**(DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer ..... (TERMINATE)**

>> **IF YES CONTINUE. OTHERWISE, THANK, TERM & TALLY BELOW. OTHERWISE, CONTINUE.**

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

SCREENER PAGE 3

S4. Have you filed a Federal Income Tax return at least once in the last three years? (RECORD ANSWER.)

- Yes .....(CONTINUE)
- No .....(TERMINATE)
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Don't Know .....(TERMINATE)
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer (TERMINATE)

>> IF YES, CONTINUE. OTHERWISE THANK, TERM & TALLY BELOW. OTHERWISE, CONTINUE.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

S5. Including yourself, how many people live in your household? (ENTER NUMBER.)

Number in Household .....  
 (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer (TERMINATE) ...23-24

>> IF 1+, CONTINUE. OTHERWISE THANK, TERM & TALLY BELOW. OTHERWISE, CONTINUE.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

S6. Which of the following best describes where you currently live? (READ CHOICES AND RECORD ONE ANSWER – IF ANY OF THE 48 STATES IN CONTINENTAL US NAMED, RECORD ANSWER AS “48 CONTIGUOUS STATES”.)

- 48 Contiguous States (includes Washington D.C.)..... 1 ...25
- Hawaii ..... 2
- Alaska ..... 3
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer (TERMINATE)

USE THE PROVIDED INCOME/HOUSEHOLD CHART TO PIPE IN INCOME FOR QS7:

S7. Is the total annual income of your household – including all sources of income – more than \$ (PIPE IN AMOUNT USING INCOME/HH CHART AND WITH HH SIZE AND RESIDENCE BASED ON QS5 & QS6) a year? (RECORD ANSWER.)

- Yes .....(TERMINATE)
- No .....(CONTINUE)
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Not Sure .....(TERMINATE)
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer (TERMINATE)

>> IF NO CONTINUE. OTHERWISE, THANK, TERM & TALLY BELOW. OTHERWISE, CONTINUE.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

<p>ALL INCOME INFORMATION WILL BE CAPTURED, BOTH TO ASSURE RESPONDENT QUALIFICATION FOR THE SURVEY AND TO PROVIDE TAS WITH THE REPORTING DATA THAT IS REQUIRED BY OMB AT THE END OF THE PROJECT.</p>
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## SCREENER PAGE 4

TABLE TO BE USED FOR Q57 – USE ANSWER FROM Q55 TO DETERMINE NUMBER IN HOUSEHOLD AND ANSWER FROM Q56 TO DETERMINE HOUSEHOLD INCOME.

Size of Family Unit	Income Ceiling (250% of Poverty Guidelines)		
	48 Contiguous States, Puerto Rico, and D.C.	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$28,725	\$35,875	\$33,075
2	\$38,775	\$48,450	\$44,625
3	\$48,825	\$61,025	\$56,175
4	\$58,875	\$73,600	\$67,725
5	\$68,925	\$86,175	\$79,275
6	\$78,975	\$98,750	\$90,825
7	\$89,025	\$111,325	\$102,375
8	\$99,075	\$123,900	\$113,925
9	\$109,125	\$136,475	\$125,475
10	\$119,175	\$149,050	\$137,025
11	\$129,225	\$161,625	\$148,575
12	\$139,275	\$174,200	\$160,125
13	\$149,325	\$186,775	\$171,675
14	\$159,375	\$199,350	\$183,225
15	\$169,425	\$211,925	\$194,775
16	\$179,475	\$224,500	\$206,325
17	\$189,525	\$237,075	\$217,875
18	\$199,575	\$249,650	\$229,425
19	\$209,625	\$262,225	\$240,975
For each additional person, add	\$10,050	\$12,575	\$11,550

**TAS's LITC User Survey  
MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Q1. Who prepared your last Federal Income tax return? Did you...**(READ CHOICES AS SHOWN BELOW AND RECORD ONE ANSWER.)

- Complete It Yourself Using Tax Software .....1 ...26
- Complete It Yourself Without Using Tax Software .....2
- Pay A Tax Preparer To Complete It ..... 3
- Have A Friend Or Family Member Complete It ..... 4
- Have A Volunteer Or Clinic Complete It ..... 5
- Other (SPECIFY)..... 6
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer ..... 7

**IF "PAY TAX PREPARER TO COMPLETE IT" TO Q1 – ASK Q2 NEXT. OTHERWISE SKIP TO Q3.**

**Q2. Did your Preparer sign or give you a copy of your Federal Income tax return?** (READ CHOICES AS SHOWN BELOW AND RECORD ONE ANSWER.)

- Preparer Signed It.....1 ...27
- Preparer Gave Me A Copy .....2
- Preparer Signed It AND Gave Me A Copy..... 3
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Don't Know ..... 4
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer ..... 5

**ASK ALL:**

**Q3. Have you ever had a Tax Preparer (or representative such as an Attorney or CPA) contact the IRS on your behalf?** (RECORD ONE ANSWER.)

- Yes .....1 ...28
- No .....2
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Don't Know ..... 3
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer ..... 4

(READ) The next few questions are about possible problems that you may be facing related to filing or payment of your Federal taxes. Your personal responses will remain anonymous and will not be shared with anyone, including the IRS. Your answers will be analyzed ONLY in combination with those of hundreds of other respondents.

**Q4. Have you received a letter or notice from the IRS, within the last three years?** (RECORD ONE ANSWER.)

- Yes .....1 ...29
- No .....2
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Don't Know ..... 3
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer ..... 4

**IF “YES” TO Q4 – ASK Q5 NEXT. OTHERWISE SKIP TO Q6.**

**Q5. Which, if any, of the following action(s) did you take first when you received your most recent letter/notice from the IRS? (ROTATE AND READ BOXED ANSWER CHOICES AND RECORD ALL THAT APPLY.)**

- Called The IRS’s Toll-Free Customer Service Line .....1 ...30
- Put The Letter/Notice Aside Or Ignored It.....2
- Called The Phone Number On The Letter/Notice.....3
- Contacted My Tax Preparer.....4
- Contacted A Tax Professional Other Than The Tax Return Preparer5
- Replied To The IRS Using The Address In The Letter/Notice .....6
- Contacted A Family Member/Friend .....7
- Contacted A Tax Clinic .....8
- Visited An IRS Office .....9
- Went To The IRS Website .....0
- (READ LAST:) Or Did You Take Some Other Action (SPECIFY)..... 1 ...31
- (DON’T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer..... 2

**ASK ALL**

**Q6. Have you ever had a problem with the IRS related to filing or payment of taxes? (RECORD ANSWER.)**

- Yes .....1 ...32
- No .....2
- (DON’T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Don’t Know ..... 3
- (DON’T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer..... 4

**IF “YES” TO Q6 – ASK Q7-Q9 NEXT. OTHERWISE SKIP TO Q10.**

**Q7. About how long ago did the most recent problem you had with the IRS related to filing or payment of taxes occur? Was it...(READ CHOICES AND RECORD ONE ANSWER.)**

- Within The Past Year .....1 ...33
- 1 To 2 Years Ago .....2
- More Than 2 Years Ago..... 3
- (DON’T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Not Sure ..... 4
- (DON’T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer..... 5

**Q8. Which of the following best describes the type of tax problem that you had? (ROTATE AND READ BOXED ANSWER CHOICES AND RECORD ALL THAT APPLY.)**

- IRS Said You Owe Money.....1 ...34
- IRS Said You Have Not Filed All Of Your Tax Returns.....2
- IRS Audited Your Tax Return .....3
- IRS Filed A Lien On Your Belongings Or In Your Name .....4
- IRS Filed A Levy On Your Earnings Or Account .....5
- Your Employer Did Not Withhold Taxes .....6
- You Did Not Receive Your Expected Refund.....7
- (READ LAST:) Some Other Type Of Problem (SPECIFY)..... 8
- (DON’T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Not Sure ..... 9
- (DON’T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer..... 0

**Q9. How long did it take to resolve this problem? Did it take...(READ CHOICES AS SHOWN BELOW & RECORD ONE ANSWER.)**

- Less Than One Month.....1 ...35
- 1 To 3 Months .....2
- 4 To 6 Months ..... 3
- 7 To 11 Months ..... 4
- 1 To 2 Years ..... 5
- More Than 2 Years ..... 6
- Still Needs To Be Resolved ..... 7
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Don't Know..... 8
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer ..... 9

**ASK ALL:**

**Q10. Are you aware that there is a specific organization outside of the IRS that has locations throughout the U.S. and helps Taxpayers with IRS problems? (RECORD ONE ANSWER BELOW.)**

- Yes .....1 ...36
- No .....2
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Not Sure ..... 3
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer..... 4

**IF "YES" TO Q10 – ASK Q11-Q12 NEXT. OTHERWISE SKIP TO Q13.**

**Q11. Do you know the name of this organization in your area? (ROTATE AND READ BOXED ANSWER CHOICES & RECORD ALL THAT APPLY.)**

- Legal Services .....1 ...37
- Low Income Taxpayer Clinic.....2
- Tax Resource Center ..... 3
- Legal Aid ..... 4
- (READ LAST:) Other (SPECIFY) ..... 5
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Not Sure ..... 6
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer..... 7

**Q12. How did you hear about these services? (ROTATE AND READ BOXED ANSWER CHOICES & RECORD ALL THAT APPLY.)**

- IRS Office .....1 ...38
- Friends Told Me ..... 2
- IRS Written Materials ..... 3
- IRS Website ..... 4
- Newspaper Article ..... 5
- Radio ..... 6
- TV ..... 7
- (READ NEXT TO LAST:) Other (SPECIFY) ..... 8
- (READ LAST:) Or Have You NOT Heard Of These Services....9
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Not Sure ..... 0
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer..... 1

**ASK ALL:**

**(READ)** The Low Income Taxpayer Clinics were established to make sure every taxpayer is treated equally and fairly. They offer free or low cost assistance for eligible individuals (250% of federal poverty level based on household size) to help resolve tax problems that have not been resolved. For example, they can help you resolve audit and collection issues and can represent you if you bring your case to tax court. Assistance in other languages is available in some locations.

- Q13. When did you last contact a Low Income Taxpayer Clinic? Was it...****(READ CHOICES AS SHOWN BELOW & RECORD ANSWER.)**
- Within The Last 6 Months ..... 1 ...39
  - 6 – 12 Months Ago..... 2
  - More Than A Year Ago ..... 3
  - Or Have You Never Contacted A Low Income Taxpayer Clinic ..... 4
  - (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:)** Prefer Not To Answer..... 5

- Q14. Based on the description that I read to you about the Low Income Taxpayer Clinic, how likely would you be to use it if you needed help? Would you be...****(READ CHOICES AS BELOW & RECORD ONE ANSWER.)**
- Very Likely ..... 1 ...40
  - Somewhat Likely..... 2
  - Neither Likely Nor Unlikely ..... 3
  - Not Very Likely ..... 4
  - Or, Not At All Likely To Use It ..... 5
  - (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:)** Prefer Not To Answer..... 6

- Q15. Which, if any, of the following services would you consider using at a Low Income Taxpayer Clinic?** **(ROTATE AND READ BOXED ANSWER CHOICES & RECORD ALL THAT APPLY.)**
- Representation In Court ..... 1 ...41
  - Help Responding To IRS Collection Issue..... 2
  - Help With An IRS Audit..... 3
  - Assistance With An IRS Notice..... 4
  - Help With IRS Appeals Case ..... 5
  - Help Correcting IRS Account Issues ..... 6
  - Learning About Your Tax Responsibilities In A Language Other Than English ..... 7
  - (READ LAST:)** Some Other Service **(SPECIFY)** ..... 8
  - (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:)** Prefer Not To Answer ..... 9

- Q16. In which, if any, of the following ways do you think the Low Income Taxpayer Clinics should advertise their services to Taxpayers?** **(ROTATE AND READ BOXED ANSWER CHOICES & RECORD ALL THAT APPLY.)**
- On TV ..... 1 ...42
  - On The Radio..... 2
  - On Posters In IRS Offices ..... 3
  - On The Notice From The IRS Informing You That You Have A Problem ..... 4
  - In The Tax Booklet ..... 5
  - On The IRS Website..... 6
  - On A Poster In Public Buildings Such As The Post Office And Senior Citizen Centers ..... 7
  - Tax Preparers Should Just Tell Taxpayers About The Low Income Tax Clinics ..... 8
  - (READ NEXT TO LAST:)** They Should Advertise In Some Other Way **(SPECIFY)** ..... 9
  - (READ LAST:)** They Should Not Advertise At All ..... 1 ...43
  - (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:)** Prefer Not To Answer ..... 2

**Q17. Which of the following times best describes how far you would be willing to travel to get help at one of these free or low cost clinic locations? (READ CHOICES AS BELOW AND RECORD ONE ANSWER.)**

- 15 Minutes Or Less ..... 1 ...44
- 16 To 30 Minutes.....2
- 31 To 45 Minutes ..... 3
- 46 To 60 Minutes ..... 4
- More Than 60 Minutes..... 5
- Not Willing To Travel At All..... 6
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer..... 9

(READ) Video Conferencing allows people to communicate over the Internet, interacting with people in other locations. By using two-way interactive audio and video communication, video conferencing allows individuals to discuss issues ‘face to face’ using technology, rather than traveling to a clinic. Video communication gives a similar sense of connection and collaboration as an in-person contact.

**Q18. Do you have a computer with an Internet connection at home? (RECORD ONE ANSWER BELOW.)**

- Yes ..... 1 ...45
- No .....2
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Not Sure ..... 3
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer ..... 4

**IF “YES” TO Q18 – ASK Q19 NEXT. OTHERWISE SKIP TO Q20.**

**Q19. Does your computer have video conferencing capability (that is, does it have a webcam and you have/or can load software such as Skype or ooVoo)? (RECORD ONE ANSWER BELOW.)**

- Yes .....1 ...46
- No .....2
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Not Sure ..... 3
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer ..... 4

**ASK ALL:**

**Q20. In which of the following situations would you feel comfortable discussing your income tax situation with your assigned representative? (ROTATE AND READ BOXED ANSWER CHOICES AND RECORD ALL THAT APPLY.)**

- In Clinic Office ..... 1 ...47
- From Home .....2
- From Work ..... 3
- By Video From A Designated Location ..... 4
- Face-To-Face At A Community Services Center..... 5
- (READ LAST:) Some Other Place Or Method (SPECIFY)..... 6



**Q21. Which, if any, of the following methods best describes how you would prefer to interact with the Low Income Taxpayer Clinic? (ROTATE AND READ BOXED ANSWER CHOICES & RECORD ALL THAT APPLY.)**

- In Person.....1 ...48
- By Telephone.....2
- In Writing.....3
- By Email .....4
- By Computer .....5
- By Video Conference .....6
- (READ LAST:) Some Other Way (SPECIFY) .....7
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Not Sure.....8
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer .....9

**Q22. Which of the following best describes how you received your last Federal income tax refund? (ROTATE AND READ BOXED ANSWER CHOICES AND RECORD ONE ANSWER.)**

- Paper Check.....1 ...49
- Direct Deposit.....2
- Debit Card.....3
- Refund Anticipation Check From Someone Other Than IRS.....4
- (READ NEXT TO LAST:) Received It Some Other Way (SPECIFY) .....5
- (READ LAST:) Or Did You Not Get A Refund? .....6
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Not Sure.....7
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer .....8

**IF "DID NOT GET A REFUND" TO Q22, SKIP TO Q24. OTHERWISE CONTINUE WITH Q23:**

**Q23. Did someone else take all or part of your tax refund? (ROTATE AND READ BOXED ANSWER CHOICES & RECORD ONLY ONE ANSWER.)**

- My Preparer Took Part Or All Of My Refund To Cover The Cost Of Return Preparation .....1 ...50
- My Preparer Took Some/All Of My Refund Without My Approval .....2
- IRS Erroneously Deposited My Refund In Someone Else's Account.....3
- IRS Took Part Or All Of My Refund To Pay Other IRS Or State Tax Liabilities .....4
- IRS Took Part Or All Of My Refund To Pay Child Support, Student Loan,  
Social Security Overpayments Or Other Federal Debts .....5
- (READ NEXT TO LAST:) Did Someone Else Take All Or Part Of Your Tax Refund (SPECIFY).....6
- (READ LAST:) Or Did No One Take Your Tax Refund.....7
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Not Sure .....8
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer .....9

**ASK ALL:**

**Q24. Do you have a personal bank account? (RECORD ONE ANSWER BELOW.)**

- Yes .....1 ...51
- No .....2
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Not Sure .....3
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer .....4

**Q25. ASK ALL:** If you had to speak to someone about your tax situation, **what language would you prefer to speak in?** (ROTATE AND READ BOXED ANSWER CHOICES AND RECORD ONLY ONE ANSWER BELOW.)

- English .....1 ...52
- Spanish .....2
- Chinese..... 3
- Vietnamese..... 4
- Korean ..... 5
- French..... 6
- German ..... 7
- Russian ..... 8
- (READ LAST:) Or Some Other Language (SPECIFY) ..... 9

**Q26. Which of the following best describes the level of education that you have completed?** (READ CHOICES AS BELOW AND RECORD ONE ANSWER.)

- Elementary School.....1 ...53
- Some High School.....2
- High School Graduate ..... 3
- Technical, Trade Or Business School ..... 4
- Some College..... 5
- College Graduate ..... 6
- Post-Graduate Work ..... 7
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer ..... 8

**Q27. Finally, do you have any of the following long-term disability conditions, that is, conditions which have lasted 6 months or more?** (ROTATE AND READ BOXED ANSWER CHOICES & RECORD ALL THAT APPLY.)

- Blindness .....1 ...54
- Deafness .....2
- Severe Vision Impairment .....3
- Severe Hearing Impairment .....4
- Severe Speech Impairment .....5
- A Condition That Substantially Limits Your Physical Abilities Such As Standing Or Walking...6
- A Condition That Limits Learning Or Remembering .....7
- (READ LAST:) Or Do You Not Have Any Long-Term Disability Condition? .....8
- (DON'T READ, BUT RECORD IF:) Prefer Not To Answer .....9

**CLOSING COMMENTS:**

That completes the survey. Thank you for your time and help. We are required by law to provide you the OMB (Office Of Management and Budget) Control Number for this public information request. That number is **1545-1432**. If you have any comments about the time estimate to complete the survey or ways to improve the survey, you may write to the IRS. Would you like the address? (IF YES, ADDRESS IS...) Internal Revenue Service, Tax Products Coordinating Committee, SE:W:CAR:MP:T:T:SP, 1111 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20224. **INTERVIEWER: AFTER COMPLETING INTERVIEW, CROSS-CHECK COMPLETENESS.**