



Top Questions and Answers to Reduce Financial Instability During the COVID-19 Crisis

Q. I have a disability and receive SSI and/or SSDI payments. Am I eligible?

A. Yes. You do not have to be earning income as an employee of a company or from any other source in addition to your Social Security payment.

Q. Are there reasons that, as a recipient of SSI and/or SSDI payments, I would not receive a \$1,200 check?

A. There are a few reasons you might not receive a payment, if you:

- are listed as a dependent on someone else's federal tax return, such as a parent.
- earn more than \$99,000 annually. There are reductions in the amount you would receive if you earn between \$75,000 and \$99,000.
- have not filed a federal income tax return for the year 2018 or 2019. You are eligible for the \$1,200, but will need to submit information and follow any additional instructions to receive the funds: [irs.gov/coronavirus/non-filers-enters-payment-info-here](https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/non-filers-enters-payment-info-here).

Q. Do asset and income limits apply to these payments for an individual receiving SSI?

A. The payment is not considered income, so it cannot impact eligibility for SSI. For 12 months, it is not considered a resource and also during that time it cannot impact the amount of your SSI benefit.

Q. If I file a joint federal tax return, am I entitled to more funds?

A. Yes, if you file jointly with your spouse, you could be entitled to \$2,400. There are reductions in the amount you receive if you earn more than \$100,000 and you will not be eligible for any funds if your income is more than \$150,000. If you jointly earned more than \$198,000, then you are not eligible.

Q. If you have a child, can you receive additional funds?

A. Yes, you could receive an additional \$500 per child.

Q. How will I get the cash payment?

A. If you filed taxes in 2018 or 2019, the payment will be made automatically to your bank account or address on file with the IRS. If you have not yet filed your taxes for 2019, you may be able to file your taxes for free by visiting the IRS website at <https://www.irs.gov/filing/free-file-do-your-federal-taxes-for-free>. Make sure to include bank information, so you will receive the cash payment more rapidly.

Q. If I am under age 70 and have an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), can I withdraw funds from it without paying penalties for early withdrawal?

A. Yes, the 10 percent penalty fee is waived for up to \$100,000 in withdrawals, if made between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020 and you are an individual who:

- is diagnosed with the COVID-19, or
- has a spouse or a qualifying dependent diagnosed with COVID-19, or
- as a result of the COVID-19 is experiencing adverse financial consequences due to quarantine, furlough, layoff, reduced work hours, mobility to work as a result of childcare issues, business closure or reduced business hours of a business owned or operated by the individual.

Q. Could I be eligible for additional unemployment benefits if I have been laid off or furloughed? What if I am self-employed and usually not eligible for unemployment benefits?

A. The federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program provides an additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits through December 31, 2020 and an additional \$600 per week, up to four months, to each recipient of unemployment insurance or this new Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefit. Contact your state unemployment assistance office: careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/UnemploymentBenefits/Find-Unemployment-Benefits.aspx.

Q. What if I have a student loan, but can't make my payment?

A. For student loans that are held by the U.S. Department of Education, payments are suspended through September 30, 2020.

Q. What if I have a home mortgage and can't meet my monthly payment?

A. Mortgage loans insured or otherwise guaranteed by the VA, FHA, USDA, Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac can, upon request, be granted a postponement for six months. No fees, penalties or interest beyond the fees that would normally be paid may be charged to the borrower.

Reach out to your mortgage lender to learn if these rules are in place because your mortgage is insured by one of these entities. Also ask what relief the bank or mortgage holder is offering and whether late fees are being waived.

Q. I have a credit card bill due, but I don't have the funds to pay it. I lost my job, was furloughed or my work hours were reduced due to the COVID-19 crisis or I work for myself and had to stop working due to the COVID-19 crisis or the mandated social distancing rules (e.g., Uber or Lyft driver). What can I do?

A. Contact customer service with the bank or card issuer to learn whether the card issuer has offered an extension of time to pay without penalty or interest fees. Call the phone number on the back of the credit card or go online. Inform the credit card issuer of your situation and secure an email or formal acknowledgement via a letter of confirmation of your status. Please be aware your amount owed will not be reduced or eliminated. However, a suspension of payment for a defined period of time could help stabilize your current financial situation.

Q. I have taxes owed to the federal government due on April 15, 2020. I don't have funds available to pay the taxes. What can I do?

A. The IRS has extended the due date for filing a tax return and paying any money owed until July 15, 2020. No interest or penalties will be assessed in connection with this extension.

Please check with your state Treasurer's office or Department of Taxation as to whether your state has granted a similar extension with no interest or penalties. Most states have done so: [aicpa.org/content/dam/aicpa/advocacy/tax/downloadabledocuments/coronavirus-state-filing-relief.pdf](https://www.aicpa.org/content/dam/aicpa/advocacy/tax/downloadabledocuments/coronavirus-state-filing-relief.pdf).