

## Seattle / King County Coalition on Homelessness Addressing Community Mail Concerns:

Those who completed the IRS non-filers portal to receive their first stimulus payment and opted to receive it as a mailed paper check, have struggled to receive follow up payments. This is especially true of people experiencing homelessness who use community mail programs for the purpose of establishing a mailing address. Thanks to determined investigation from homeless outreach staff in Seattle, it was discovered that many of these community mail locations have been flagged as locations to not deliver stimulus checks to by the post office, under instruction from the Department of Treasury. We believe this is because these mailing addresses have been used fraudulently by community members attempting to steal stimulus funds from other people when the first payment was issued in 2020.

Furthermore, people in this situation who try to claim these funds as a rebate on their tax return have seen their returns rejected because the IRS believes they have already issued the payment.

Once a tax return has been rejected for this reason, the best course of action is to submit a trace request form, otherwise known as a [3911 form](#). Submitting this form starts the process of determining whether the payment in question was returned to sender. The client can then re-submit their tax return once receiving confirmation that their payment was returned to sender to claim their rebate.

To complete a Form 3911 trace for any of the three stimulus check, the IRS provides the following instructions:

- Write "EIP", followed by the number "1,2, or 3" on the top of the form based on which stimulus payment is in question. EIP stands for Economic Impact Payment, so if you are requesting a trace on the second payment write "EIP2"
- Complete the form answering all refund questions as they relate to your payment.
- When completing item 7 under Section 1:
  - Check the box for "Individual" as the **Type of return**.
  - Enter "2021" as the **Tax Period**.
  - Do not write anything for the **Date Filed**.
  - Sign the form. If you're married and filing together, both spouses must sign the form

Please note that this process can take up to four to six weeks to complete, we encourage you to proactively fill out this form along with the return and save a copy for future use. For additional assistance in these situations, you can contact the University of Washington Federal Tax Clinic at 206-685-6805.

**Update and Victory!** Thanks to your feedback, an investigation was launched by staff from Representative Pramila Jayapal's office on this matter. On Friday May 7, the IRS confirmed that they did flag certain social service addresses as Do Not Deliver due to fraud concerns. They have agreed to remove the address suspicion flag from these locations, and furthermore have agreed to re-issue all returned stimulus checks to those locations. This would not have happened without dedicated advocacy and follow up from our members in direct service positions. Address flag has been removed from the following locations:

- Reach- 2133 3rd Avenue, #116, Seattle, WA 98121
- Compass Housing Alliance- 77 S Washington St, Seattle, WA 98104
- Ballard Food Bank- 5130 Leary Ave NW, Seattle, WA 98107
- St. Vincent de Paul Georgetown Food Bank. 5972 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Seattle 98108
- New Bethlehem Family Day Center. 11920 NE 80<sup>th</sup> St, Suite 100, Kirkland WA 98033
- Kent Family Engagement Center. 1225 W Smith St, Kent WA 98030
- Federal Way Day Center. 33505 13<sup>th</sup> Pl S, Suite D. Federal Way, WA 98003

Payments will be re-issued to clients of these mail programs within the next 3-4 weeks, we encourage you to follow up in mid-June to confirm payments were received. We still encourage you to follow the instructions above and complete a 3911 form along with your client's tax return in case it will become necessary.

We believe there are other social service addresses that may have been flagged as well. If you believe your program has been impacted, please email [Jason@homelessinfo.org](mailto:Jason@homelessinfo.org) so we can follow up with Representative Jayapal's staff.

## Alternatives to Community Mail Programs:

**Pre-Loaded Debt Cards:** Clients can opt to receive their stimulus funds on a pre-loaded debt card instead of a paper check. Those who have opted for this payment method have not experienced the same delays and denials of their payment as those who opted for paper checks. Be aware that some clients who requested these cards be sent to community mail programs have been asked to confirm their identity with the IRS. This has also been an issue with some clients who opted for direct deposit as well.

**Post Office General Delivery:** Some post office locations can be used as a general delivery mailing address, which have not seen the address flag issue mentioned above. This may be a good option for your client, however be advised that general delivery rules and requirements vary widely based on the local post office. [Click here](#) to find general delivery services in your area. Once you find a location in your area, call the local post office number, and ask about any special circumstances related to the service. Some general delivery programs can only hold mail to be forwarded to another address, some charge additional fees associated with the service, and some refuse to hold packages from competitor services like FedEx / UPS. If you wish to pursue this option for your client, call the local office and ask the following questions:

- Do you accept and distribute general delivery mail?
- Are there any restrictions on general delivery mail?
- When can I pick up my general delivery mail?
- Are there additional fees associated with using general delivery?
- Do you have a limit on the size or quantity of packages?
- Do you accept general delivery from FedEx, Amazon, UPS etc?