

The Virgin Islands Consortium

As Gov't Shutdown Ends, IRS Kicks Off 2019 Tax-Filing Season

Community Center / **Published On January 30, 2019 11:02 AM /**

Staff **January 30, 2019**



The Internal Revenue Service successfully opened the 2019 tax-filing season on Monday as the agency started accepting and processing federal tax returns for tax year 2018. According to the IRS, despite the major tax law changes made by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the IRS was able to open this year's tax-filing season one day earlier than the 2018 tax-filing season.

The USVI's Bureau of Internal Revenue said earlier this month that certain income tax return forms for tax year 2018 had not been received as a result of the partial federal government shutdown. To that end, B.I.R. advised that Virgin Islands residents and businesses could order limited quantities of tax forms, instructions and publications

needed to complete 2018 and subsequent tax returns on the IRS's website, www.irs.gov. The reopening of the federal government on Friday should have eliminated the inconvenience.

More than 150 million individual tax returns for the 2018 tax year are expected to be filed, with the vast majority of those coming before the April tax deadline. Through mid-day Monday, the IRS had already received several million tax returns during the busy opening hours, according to the IRS.

"I am extremely proud of the entire IRS workforce. The dedicated IRS employees have worked tirelessly to successfully implement the biggest tax law changes in 30 years and launch tax season for the nation," said IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig. "Although we face various near- and longer-term challenges, our employees are committed to doing everything we can to help taxpayers and get refunds out quickly."

Following the government shutdown, the IRS said it was working to promptly resume normal operations.

"The IRS will be doing everything it can to have a smooth filing season," Mr. Rettig said. "Taxpayers can minimize errors and speed refunds by using e-file and IRS Free File along with direct deposit."

The IRS expects the first refunds to go out in the first week of February and many refunds to be paid by mid- to late February like previous years. The IRS reminds taxpayers to check "Where's My Refund?" for updates. Demand on IRS phones during the early weeks of tax season is traditionally heavy, so taxpayers are encouraged to use IRS.gov to find answers before they call.

April deadline; help for taxpayers through e-file, Free File

The filing deadline to submit 2018 tax returns is Monday, April 15, 2019, for most taxpayers. Because of the Patriots' Day holiday on April 15 in Maine and Massachusetts and the Emancipation Day holiday on April 16 in the District of Columbia, taxpayers who live in Maine or Massachusetts have until April 17 to file their returns.

With major changes made by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the IRS encouraged taxpayers seeking more information on tax reform to consult two online resources: Publication 5307, Tax Reform: Basics for Individuals and Families, and Publication 5318; Tax Reform What's New for Your Business. For other tips and resources, visit IRS.gov/taxreform or check out the Get Ready page on IRS.gov. The IRS expects about 90 percent of returns to be filed electronically. Choosing e-file and direct deposit remains the fastest and safest way to file an accurate income tax return and receive a refund.