



# IRS EXTERNAL LEADS PROGRAM: FACT SHEET ON SUBMITTING LEADS

## Introduction

The IRS Return Integrity and Correspondence Services (RICS) External Leads Program is responsible for receiving and processing leads and Automated Clearing House (ACH) credits returned by financial institutions because the funds were considered to be questionable. External Leads works with IRS Submission Processing to receive questionable leads, screen and validate the associated lead and account information, and subsequently request the recovery of refunds to reconcile accounts. The Program receives leads from over 125 financial institutions, state and local agencies, and internal business units throughout the IRS. Federal tax refunds returned to the IRS associated with leads can be submitted to the IRS electronically via the Financial Management Service's (FMS) ACH Credit Gateway. The FMS Credit Gateway uses existing ACH deposit methods to allocate funds to a specific account locator number associated with External Leads. Any source able to submit ACH Fedwire deposits should be able to use the Credit Gateway. Returned refunds may also be submitted via paper check if necessary. Correct and accurate lead submission ensures the IRS recovers funds efficiently.

### Definition of an "External Lead"

- External Leads involve questionable Federal Tax Refunds from financial institutions and various other sources
- Leads involve Treasury checks, direct deposits/ACH, refund anticipation loans/ checks and pre-paid debit cards

## Steps for Submitting Leads to the IRS

### High-Level Process



1. **Financial Institutions: Submit standard External Lead Spreadsheet via secured email to the External Leads group mailbox:** The spreadsheet provides critical personal identifiable information (PII) which helps the IRS identify the source of funds and ensure accurate processing of any funds returned (see Table on page 2 for requested lead information).
  - **Email address:** [efleads@irs.gov](mailto:efleads@irs.gov) and copy [dexter.brown@irs.gov](mailto:dexter.brown@irs.gov) (Program POC)
  - **Email Subject Line:** Description **must** include financial institution name, date, and "External Leads" (Note: If you are unable to use the Credit Gateway, or require additional information, please add a note for paper check)
  - **Email Body:**
    - Reason for questionable lead(s)/return
    - Financial institution's point-of contact: name, title, phone/fax number, email address and financial institution/company submitting lead
    - Physical street address of the financial institution (no P.O. Boxes)
    - If applicable, request indemnification letter (Note: If the indemnification letter should be sent to a different point of contact at your financial institution, please identify the appropriate department and point of contact in the lead email)
    - NOTE: Please be sure to include the RTN of the institution AND the physical address
  - **Attachments:** Attach completed, standardized External Leads spreadsheet to the email.
  - **Secure Format:** Email should have a secure password. Please provide the password to the spreadsheet attachment in a separate email. The same password may be used throughout the filing season.

## IRS External Leads Program

External Leads Standardized Spreadsheet Fields			
Source of External Lead	Reason for Referral	Name of Account Holder	Treasury Check Number
Date of Submission	Address: City, State and Zip of Account Holder	Refund RTN	Date of Original Deposit
Tax Period/Year	Name on Refund Check if Different From Account Owner	Account Number of Refund	Amount of Original Deposit (Federal tax refund)
Amount of Refund Available for Recovery	SSN of Account Holder	Debit Card Number (if applicable)	

2. **IRS: Conduct Lead Research (Screening and Verification)**

Upon receipt of a lead, the IRS will provide an acknowledgement email and a Lead Number for future reference. Based on the information received, External Leads will complete the necessary research on the individual accounts.

3. **IRS: Request Refund Repayment Amount from Financial Institution**

The IRS will contact the financial institution within approximately 15 business days and inform the financial institution of the total amount of funds that should be returned to the IRS. The IRS will provide financial institutions with an indemnification letter prior to transmittal of funds.

4. **Financial Institution: Return Refunds to the IRS**

- **Electronic (preferred method):** Upon notification from the IRS, funds should be submitted via ACH Credit Gateway. Credit Gateway is a deposit program that FMS (a branch of the Treasury Department) uses for the receipt of ACH transactions. Upon completion of lead review, the IRS will provide the appropriate account locator number (ALC) for the Credit Gateway transaction, and Gateway Account number (per IRS site). The financial institution should return the funds via the Credit Gateway. Additional information on the FMS credit gateway can be found at [www.fms.treas.gov/creditgateway/index](http://www.fms.treas.gov/creditgateway/index). In addition, the financial institution should send an email to [efleads@irs.gov](mailto:efleads@irs.gov) indicating the Lead Number(s) and ALC number prior to transmission along with the expected date of deposit. For each transaction, please be sure to include date (month and day), lead number, bank name, BL (to indicate "bank lead") and the Tax Class Code (20X0903) in the Credit Gateway Receiving Company Field for your transmission.

Email: [efleads@irs.gov](mailto:efleads@irs.gov)

- **Manual:** If unable to use the Credit Gateway, financial institutions may also return funds manually via paper checks (i.e. cashier's checks) with an attached copy of the Lead Spreadsheet that indicates the Lead Number(s). This may be mailed directly to External Leads at:

Internal Revenue Service  
Attn: External Leads Manager  
P.O. Box 24012 Fresno, CA 93779

5. **IRS: Adjust Taxpayer Accounts based on Returned, Recovered Refunds**

The External Leads team works in conjunction with IRS Submission Processing to reconcile and adjust the accounts of each identifiable taxpayer.

### Inquiries

Financial institutions may occasionally receive inquiries regarding funds returned to the IRS. Since it takes several weeks for funds to be processed through accounting, phone assistants may not have information regarding the returns. Once appropriate research has been conducted, taxpayers should receive further correspondence from the IRS in most cases. When receiving inquiries, account holders can be advised that funds have been returned to the IRS; however, it takes 6-8 weeks before account information is readily available. There is not a specific IRS phone line for these inquiries. Any specific concerns from the financial institution may be directed to the External Leads Program. The group mailbox is for financial institution, internal business unit, and state agency use **only**.