



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Tax Season

STEVEN GUILBEAULT

Member of Parliament
Laurier-Sainte-Marie



steven.guilbeault



@s_guilbeault



stevenguilbeault

Spring 2021

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MP

Dear residents of Laurier-Sainte-Marie,

The return of spring coincides each year with tax season : the time of year when every Canadian has to file their income tax return. The year 2020 has been particularly challenging and this tax season is unlike any other. COVID-19 has had a financial impact on many; millions of Canadians have received critical COVID-19 aid, and many have been forced to work from home.

You are generally required to file a tax return even if you have no income or even if your income is tax-exempt. Even if you don't have to pay tax, filing an income tax return may allow you to receive a refund, as well as allow you to continue to receive benefit payments for which you are eligible, such as the Canada Child Benefit, the GST/HST credit and the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

You will find practical information and useful resources in this newsletter. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions. My team and I are here for you.

Steven Guilbeault
Member of Parliament for Laurier-Sainte-Marie
Minister of Canadian Heritage

DEADLINE : FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 2021

Friday, April 30, 2021 is the deadline to file your 2020 tax return, which covers the period from January 1 to December 31, 2020.

If you have a balance due, it must be paid by April 30 to avoid paying interest (unless you are eligible for interest relief measures - see next page). If you can't pay your balance due, file your tax return by April 30 anyway to avoid a late filing penalty and to ensure that your benefits and credits continue without interruption.



CONTACT

CONSTITUENCY OFFICE
800, DE MAISONNEUVE
EAST BLVD, SUITE 604,
MONTREAL (QUEBEC)
H2L 4L8
Tel. 514-522-1339

*Because of COVID-19, we work mostly remotely, but we are reachable at all times by phone and by email.

✉ steven.guilbeault@parl.gc.ca

🌐 stevenguilbeault.libparl.ca/

More than \$36 billion was refunded to Canadians in 2020. Even if you earned little income or had no income, you should still file your tax return because you may be eligible for a refund, benefit or credit.



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Canadian recycled paper

INTEREST RELIEF MEASURES

Our government understands the difficult circumstances we have faced over the past year and is being flexible to support Canadians.

We announced that once eligible individuals file their 2020 tax returns, they will not have to pay interest on any outstanding tax debt from the 2020 tax year until April 30, 2022, a year later than originally scheduled. The interest relief measure will give Canadians more time to pay off outstanding balances.

To be eligible for this targeted interest relief, individuals must have had total taxable income of \$75,000 or less in 2020 and have received income support in 2020 through one or more of the COVID-19 measures. The Canada Revenue Agency will automatically apply the interest relief measure to eligible individuals.

This measure will provide approximately 4.5 million low- and middle-income Canadians with the flexibility to receive COVID-19 income support without facing additional stress when filing their taxes.

In addition, benefits and credits that are normally paid monthly or quarterly, such as the Canada Child Benefit and the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit, will not be applied to reduce personal income tax liabilities for the 2020 taxation year.



REQUESTING THE CANCELLATION OR WAIVING OF PENALTIES AND INTEREST

If exceptional circumstances prevent you from filing your tax return or paying your taxes on time, the taxpayer relief provisions may allow the Canada Revenue Agency to waive or cancel penalties or interest, or refund or reduce a balance owing. The following are some examples of when a taxpayer may receive relief :

- a natural or man-made disaster such as a flood or fire
- a personal misfortune, such as a serious illness or accident
- an error or delay caused by the Canada Revenue Agency
- an inability to pay or financial difficulties

SET UP A PAYMENT ARRANGEMENT

Have you filed your tax return but can't pay the full amount due? Contact the Canada Revenue Agency to set up a payment arrangement. The parameters of payment arrangements have been expanded to give Canadians more time and flexibility to repay a tax debt. If you are in financial difficulty and owe money, you can get help by contacting the Canada Revenue Agency.

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY ONLINE SERVICES

My Account online : Accessing your CRA My Account online allows you to view, change and manage your personal tax information. You can track your refund, modify your return, change your address or phone number, receive mail online, sign up for direct deposit, and much more. Visit www.canada.ca/my-account-cra

MyCRA mobile application : The MyCRA mobile application allows you to view the status of your return, change your address, update your marital status, update your direct deposit information and more - all on your mobile device.

MyBenefits CRA mobile application : MyBenefits CRA is a mobile application that allows you to view your benefit payment details and eligibility information. Visit www.canada.ca/cra-mobile-apps

Child and Family Benefits Calculator : You can use the calculator available on the Canada Revenue Agency website to determine your child and family benefits and payment amounts.

For additional content and relevant hyperlinks, consult this newsletter in electronic format on my website, where you can also sign up to receive news by email : <https://stevenguilbeault.libparl.ca/>

HOW TO FILE YOUR RETURN

There are several ways to file your tax return

You can file your tax return online using certified tax software, on paper, through a tax preparer, at a free or low-cost tax clinic, and even over the phone.

Filing your tax return over the phone? It's possible!

The federal government is making it easier for eligible individuals with low or fixed incomes, whose situation remains the same each year, to file their income tax return. The "File My Return" service is an automated telephone service that allows eligible individuals to file their tax return by providing certain personal information and answering a series of short questions. This service is secure and easy to use. Eligible individuals should have received an invitation letter in the mail by the end of February. For more information, go to www.canada.ca/file-my-return or call the Canada Revenue Agency Individual Tax Inquiries line at 1-800-959-8281.

Free software to complete your tax return

Last year, 90 % of Canadians filed their taxes online.

You can file your tax return online if you complete it using tax software that has been certified by the Canada Revenue Agency as *NETFILE*. It's simple, fast and secure. Many of these programs are available free of charge and offer the following advantages :

- This process is often more accurate and has less chance of error.
- You get immediate confirmation that the Canada Revenue Agency has received your tax return.
- You don't have to mail in receipts unless the Canada Revenue Agency requests them at a later date.
- You get your refund faster. Sign up for direct deposit to avoid postal delays and get your refund faster. You may receive it within eight business days.

A list of certified *NETFILE* software is available at www.canada.ca/netfile under the "Certified Tax Software" tab.

Note that the Auto-fill my return feature automatically fills in certain parts of your tax return with information that the Canada Revenue Agency has on file. Register with My Account and use a certified tax software to take advantage of this service.

Paper tax package

If you prefer to file your tax return on paper, you can do so. If you filed your taxes by paper before November 30, 2020, you do not need to order the new paper tax package. The Canada Revenue Agency will mail you the 2020 package so that you can file your return before the deadline and avoid any disruption in the payment of benefits and credits.

If you did not receive a paper tax package and wish to get one, you can :

- Order it online : <https://apps.cra-arc.gc.ca/ebci/cjcf/fpos-scfp/pub/rdr>
- View it, download it and print it : www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/forms-publications/tax-packages-years/general-income-tax-benefit-package.html
- Order it by phone at 1-855-330-3305 (Social Insurance Number required).

REGISTER FOR DIRECT DEPOSIT!

Direct deposit is fast, convenient and secure and it ensures that you avoid postal delays and get your payments on time in the event of an emergency or unforeseen circumstances. You'll get your refund faster – sometimes in eight business days. Here is how to sign up :

Online : You can sign up yourself if you are registered for My Account.

Online - mobile application : To start or update direct deposit information, use the MyCRA mobile app.

Through many financial institutions : You can sign up for direct deposit or change your account information through many financial institutions. Once you provide consent through one of these financial institutions, your CRA direct deposit information will be updated the following day. We encourage you to visit your financial institution's website for information on how to sign up.

By phone : To sign up for direct deposit or to change your account information, call the Canada Revenue Agency at 1-800-959-8281.

For more information : www.canada.ca/cra-direct-deposit

YOU HAVEN'T FILED A TAX RETURN IN A WHILE OR NEVER FILED ONE?

If you've never filed a tax return, haven't filed a tax return in a while, or would like to file tax returns for previous years, do so now. Check out this step-by-step guide : www.canada.ca/taxes-get-ready

ARE YOU SELF-EMPLOYED AND HAVE QUESTIONS?

The Canada Revenue Agency Liaison Officer Service offers free support and advice to self-employed individuals and small business owners to help them understand their tax obligations, avoid common mistakes and learn more about current tax relief measures. The service is currently offered virtually by phone or video conference, or by group webinars. For more information, visit : www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/small-business-tax-help.html

For self-employed individuals, the tax filing deadline is Tuesday, June 15, 2021. However, any amounts due must be paid by Friday, April 30, 2021.

SELF-EMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS AND THE CANADA EMERGENCY RESPONSE BENEFIT (CERB)

Self-employed individuals who have applied for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) based on their gross self-employment income will not be required to repay the CERB, provided they also meet all other eligibility criteria.

This means that self-employed individuals whose net self-employment income was less than \$5,000 and who applied for CERB will not be required to repay it, provided their gross self-employment income was at least \$5,000 and they meet all other eligibility criteria.

Some self-employed individuals whose net self-employment income was less than \$5,000 may have already voluntarily repaid the CERB. The Canada Revenue Agency and Service Canada will return any amounts already repaid.



CREDITS AND BENEFITS YOU MIGHT BE ELIGIBLE FOR

When you file your income tax return, you may be eligible for the following :

- The Canada Child Benefit, a tax-free payment made each month to eligible families to help them support their children under the age of 18.
- The GST/HST credit, a non-taxable payment made every three months that helps individuals aged 19 and over and low- and modest-income families recover all or part of the GST or HST they pay.
- The Canada Training Credit, a new refundable tax credit to help Canadians pay for eligible training expenses. An individual may be able to claim this credit for eligible tuition and other fees paid to an eligible educational institution in Canada for courses taken in 2020, or fees paid in connection with an examination for a professional status, licence or qualification in 2020.
- The Canada Workers Benefit, a refundable tax credit available to individuals and families who are working but earning a low income.
- Pension income splitting, which allows pensioners to split up to 50 % of their eligible pension income with their spouse or common-law partner, which may reduce their tax liability.
- The Canada Caregiver Credit, a non-refundable tax credit that can be claimed by individuals who support a spouse, common-law partner or dependant who has a physical or mental impairment.
- The Disability Tax Credit (DTC), a non-refundable tax credit for eligible individuals with disabilities or their supporting family members. You can claim the DTC by filing Form T2201 at any time during the year.
- The Medical Expense Tax Credit. A detailed list of eligible medical expenses is available on the Canada Revenue Agency website.
- The Home Accessibility Tax Credit. You can claim an amount for eligible expenses for eligible renovations to an eligible dwelling.

For more information : www.canada.ca/deductions-credits-expenses

NOTICE TO STUDENTS

If you are a student, here are some benefits and credits that could save you money during the tax-filing season :

Tuition Tax Credit - You may be able to reduce the amount of tax you owe if you paid tuition fees at a post-secondary institution or an educational institution recognized by Employment and Social Development Canada to upgrade your job skills.

Transfer and carry forward amount - You can no longer claim the education amount and the textbook amount on your tax return. However, you may be able to carry forward unused amounts from previous years to another year. If you carry forward an unused amount, you must claim it when you file your return for the first year you owe income tax.

Interest paid on your student loans - You may be eligible for an amount for interest paid since 2015 on your student loans for post-secondary education.

Moving expenses - If you moved for your post-secondary education and are a full-time student, you may be eligible for a refund of moving expenses. However, you can only deduct these expenses from scholarships, research grants or certain awards that must be included in your income. You may also be able to claim moving expenses for work, such as a summer job or running a business. In this case, you can deduct eligible moving expenses from the employment or self-employment income you earned at your new job. You are entitled to reimbursement of moving expenses if you moved at least 40 kilometers closer to your place of work or school.

Child care expenses - If you paid someone to look after your child so that you could study, do paid work or research, you may be able to deduct these expenses.

NEED HELP FILLING OUT YOUR TAX RETURN?

If you have a modest income and a simple tax situation, you may be able to get free or low-cost help filling out your tax return at one of the tax clinics that serve the residents of Laurier-Sainte-Marie.

The list of these tax clinics is available :

- On the Canada Revenue Agency website, in the "Find a free tax clinic" section : www.canada.ca/free-tax-help
- On the Info-reference 211 website : www.211qc.ca/en/employment-and-income/income-tax-clinics-for-low-income-people

Here are some of these tax clinics :

Entraide Léo Théorêt

2000-B, Alexandre-DeSève St., Montreal, QC H2L 2W4
514-521-0095 ext.111

2021 Tax Clinic : Until mid-April. Make an appointment by phone.
Fees : Voluntary contribution

La Maison d'Aurore

4816, Garnier St., Montreal, QC H2J 4B4
514-527-9075 info@maisonaurore.org www.maisonaurore.org
2021 Tax Clinic : Make an appointment by phone or email.
Fees : \$5

Y des femmes de Montréal

1355, René-Lévesque Blvd W., Montreal, QC H3G 1T3
514-866-9941 ext. 235
2021 Tax Clinic : Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. until April 30, 2021. Make an appointment by phone. Open to women and their families.
Fees : Free

Association récréative Milton-Parc

Centre multiethnique Saint-Louis, 3555, Saint-Urbain St., Montreal, QC H2X 2N6
514-872-0566 ext. 0 info@miltonpark.org www.miltonpark.org/post/impots
2021 Tax Clinic : Monday to Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. until April 30, 2021. By appointment only.
Fees : Free. Suggested voluntary contribution : \$5

Action Centre-Ville

105, Ontario East St., # 201, Montreal, QC H2X 1G9
514-878-0847 info@acv-montreal.com www.acv-montreal.com
2021 Tax Clinic : The service is reserved to Action Centre-Ville members (membership : \$15) and targeted to those 50 years and older. Make an appointment by phone.
Fees : \$5 fees will be applied for printing of documents.

Centre d'entraide et de raliement familial

105, Ontario East St., # 101, Montreal, QC H2X 1G9
514-288-8314 cerfmontreal@gmail.com
2021 Tax Clinic : Tuesdays and Wednesdays until mid-April. By appointment.
Fees : \$6. Limited space available.

Projets autochtones du Québec

169, de la Gauchetière East, Montreal, QC H2X 1P7
514-879-3310 ext. 205 transitioncaseworker@paqc.org
Fees : Free. Services for Indigenous individuals.

BEWARE OF SCAMS

This tax season, many scams target the most vulnerable taxpayers, including seniors and newcomers to Canada. Here are some examples of fraudulent behaviour :

- Demanding that you make an immediate payment to them via Interac transfer, bitcoin, prepaid credit card, or merchant gift card (iTunes, Amazon, or other)
- Using aggressive language and threatening to have you arrested or call the police
- Leaving threatening voicemails or giving out personal or financial information
- Asking you to send an email containing your personal or financial information, or giving out such information via email
- Asking you to click on a link to provide personal or financial information in an online form
- Asking you to click on a link to obtain a refund
- Arranging for you to make a payment in person

The Canada Revenue Agency will never text you or use instant messaging services (such as Facebook or WhatsApp) under any circumstances.

If you witness fraudulent behaviour, you must report it immediately to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre. Call 1-888-495-8501 or go to www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/report-signalez-eng.htm If you notice any suspicious activity in My Account, contact the Canada Revenue Agency at 1-800-959-8281.

For more information, visit www.canada.ca/slam-the-scam

If you believe you have been a victim of identity theft or fraud, call the Canada Revenue Agency to verify your account and discuss additional security measures.

Note that depending on the situation, it is also recommended to :

- File a complaint with the police
- Contact the two credit bureaus in Canada : Equifax at 1-800-465-7166 and TransUnion at 1-800-663-9980 (for Quebec residents : 1-877-713-3393)
- Inform your financial institution and creditors by phone and in writing of any irregularities
- Report any irregularities in your mail to Canada Post

HOME OFFICE EXPENSE DEDUCTION

Did you work from home in 2020? The home office expense deduction is now more accessible and easier to claim.

We've introduced a simplified, flat-rate calculation method that allows affected workers to claim a tax deduction to help cover the expenses of working from home. Deductions reduce the amount of income on which you pay tax, which lowers your overall income tax liability. To qualify, you must have worked from home more than 50 % of the time for at least four consecutive weeks in 2020 due to COVID-19.

The temporary flat rate calculation method allows eligible employees to claim \$2 for each day they worked from home in 2020 due to COVID-19, up to a maximum of \$400. This method can be used by completing Form T777S for the 2020 tax year. Employees who want to deduct more home office expenses can elect to use the existing detailed method to calculate their home office expense deduction by completing Form T777.

Visit : www.canada.ca/cra-home-workspace-expenses

TAX CREDIT FOR DIGITAL NEWS SUBSCRIPTIONS

You may be able to claim a non-refundable tax credit for your expenses for an eligible digital news subscription from a qualified Canadian journalistic organization. The maximum value of the credit will be calculated as follows : the lowest personal income tax rate (15 %) will be multiplied by the total of all amounts paid by an individual for an eligible subscription expenditure in the year, up to a maximum of \$500.

Services offered by my office:

- COVID-19 Support Measures
- Employment Insurance
- Canada Pension Plan
- Old Age Security
- Guaranteed Income Supplement
- Canada Revenue Agency
- Citizenship and Immigration
- Passport Canada
- Veterans Affairs
- Canada Student Loans
- Federal funding for organizations
- Federal Crown Corporations
- Acquisition of Canadian flags and pins

BENEFITS RELATED TO COVID-19

Each year, you receive a T4 information slip from your employer. This slip is a summary of your employment income for the year and related deductions.

Recipients of COVID-19 benefits will also receive a T4A or T4E slip. The slips will arrive by mail or electronically (via My Account) by March 10, 2021. Quebec residents will also receive an RL-1 slip. These slips contain the information you need to report on your return.

You will receive a T4A slip if you received any of these benefits :

- the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) from the Canada Revenue Agency
- the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB)
- the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB)
- the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB)
- the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB)
- provincial or territorial financial assistance amounts related to COVID-19

You will receive a T4E slip if you received any of these benefits :

- the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) from Service Canada
- Employment Insurance (EI) benefits

Like employment insurance benefits, COVID-19 emergency and economic stimulus benefits, including similar provincial benefits, are taxable. All payments you received in 2020 must be reported on your 2020 tax return.

For information on federal aid measures under Covid-19, visit www.canada.ca/coronavirus or contact my office.

ONCE YOUR RETURN IS FILED

If you need to amend your return

As soon as your return is processed, the Canada Revenue Agency will send you a Notice of Assessment indicating whether you will receive a refund or have a balance owing, and if there are any changes or corrections. If you need to change your return after you send it in, do not file another return for that tax year. Wait until you receive your Notice of Assessment before you change your return.

Please note : ReFILE is a service available through all approved tax software. It allows you to amend your return if you have forgotten something, made a mistake, or want to make a change after you receive your Notice of Assessment.

Processing times

The average processing time for an online return is two weeks. When you submit your return online and enroll in direct deposit, you can receive your refund in as little as eight days. For paper filing, the delay could be 10 to 12 weeks this year. For this reason, people who decide to file a paper return should do so as soon as they get their paper tax package.

How long should you keep your records?

Keep your receipts and supporting documents for six years.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The content of this newsletter is adapted mostly from the Canada Revenue Agency website. For more information :

Visit the "Get Ready to Do Your Taxes" page :

www.canada.ca/taxes-get-ready

Contact the Canada Revenue Agency :

- Individual Tax Inquiries : 1-800-959-8281 (English) 1-800-959-7383 (French)
- Benefit Inquiries : 1-800-387-1193 (English) 1-800-387-1194 (French)
- Businesses : 1-800-959-5525 (English) 1-800-959-7775 (French)

Call center hours of operation are extended until April 30, 2021, Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (local time).

The automated callback service allows callers to hold their place in the queue without having to wait.

Contact Employment and Social Development Canada :

For general questions about Employment Insurance or your My Service Canada Account, contact Employment and Social Development Canada.

General Inquiries : 1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232)

Employment Insurance : 1-800-808-6352