

IRS to start website overhaul in August

The public will see a new version of the IRS website late this summer. The IRS has worked on a push to move more taxpayer services online to enable more resources and applications. A revamp of [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) is scheduled for August, said Michele Causey, director of user experience and design for the agency's Office of Online Services.

The new version of the site will be mobile-friendly, with content tailored to meet users' needs on a smartphone or tablet. The website will also eventually have the metadata structure needed to support smart technology and artificial intelligence capabilities. There will be changes using visual images and symbols used with a type of artistic or icon interpretation of these. The overhaul will come in phases, as the IRS migrates its web content management system from Open Text to Drupal. The project is part of the IRS Future State initiative, the agency's long-term vision to eliminate more in-person and over the phone services in favor of online options.

The agency is also continuing to develop a secure online account for taxpayers to check the status of their balances, as well as a new digital communications tool where citizens can correspond with the IRS in a secure environment.

Taxpayer Advocate Nina Olson has [criticized](#) the IRS' Future State program, arguing that the move toward online-only services leaves out a large portion of the U.S. taxpayer base that doesn't have a reliable internet source. According to her office's research, 33 million taxpayers don't have broadband internet access, and 14 million don't have internet at all.

The IRS' budget situation necessitates that the agency look for new capabilities to deliver taxpayer services and some would say that the IRS hasn't always developed the tools that taxpayers want.

Through programs like Improveirs.org and the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel, the IRS is conducting more user studies to learn about the public's preferences before developing a new tool. When it does develop a new capability, the IRS is reviewing its call center operations and measures whether the online solution has any impact on customer service over the phone. In addition, the IRS is forgoing past development schedules for these new projects.

If you are looking for specific tax information for your individual tax concerns or about the status of your refund, please go to [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) and check out what the site has to offer.

Assistance is available to Service members, retirees and Family Members with valid military identification. Taxpayers should ensure they have all their information before filing a tax return, including a copy of their prior year's tax returns if possible. For more information, call the Fort Sill Income Tax Assistance Center at (580) 442-6445/8819.