

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

May 7-13, 2021

MONTEREY PENINSULA MAKEOVERS—Part 19



how do people get
golden state stimulus checks
if they don't file tax

who's eligible
do the homeless qualify
for six hundred bucks

if you're elderly
or on disability
must you file a claim



DOES THE GOVERNOR'S RECALL HINGE ON THOSE WHO DON'T GET CHECKS?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

FOLLOWING publication of last week's column, "Recall the governor? The little red oracle weighs in!" this question arrived from HC, Marina: "If Governor Gavin Newsom was sincere in his promise last January to provide \$600 payments through the Golden State Stimulus bill, where's my money? I'm 76, homeless, on SSI/SSD, and I understand only about half the people in California have received their checks as of May 1, 2021. Why?"

"I'm in your age group, but am not homeless," I responded. "I'm 86, live on Social Security income of \$1,086 per month, and am a Medi-Cal recipient. Like you, I haven't yet received my \$600 Golden State Stimulus check. I'll see what I can find out."

HC answered, "I'll contact the attorney I've been talking with regarding senior services and see what she can tell us."

"Good," I said. "I'll see what I can find out from the State of California Franchise Tax Board."

So, we both went to work.

What You Need to Know

In my file was a notice dated February 1, 2021, from the Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, Austin, Texas, with the subject line: Your Second Economic Impact Payment.

It followed up the first Economic Impact Payment of \$1,200 dated May 28, 2020. This letter advised that a \$600 check had been sent by direct deposit. This "EIP2" check was provided by the COVID-related Tax Relief Act of 2020. It arrived on January 2, 2021.

This was not the same \$600 check now in question, since it was a federal issue, not state, but the letter gave me clues on how to start researching where the Golden State Stimulus check might be.

“Your EIP2 payment is based on information from your 2019 Federal Income Tax Return or information you provided using the Non-filers tool,” the letter continued. This statement applied to me, as I recalled how easy it had been to apply for the Non-filers refund. Once I filed, I simply had to wait a few weeks.

As a federal benefits (Social Security) recipient, my \$600 was sent to the same bank account in which my Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits are received by direct deposit.

I presumed the same procedure would easily apply to the California benefit. Digging through my file, I found my 2020 Form 1095-B which was issued by the IRS and contained all the information for the Department of Health Care Services (DCHA), which reports my California health care coverage to the IRS.

So, I tried to find the Non-filers tab on the California Franchise Tax Board website.

Guess what, folks?

No such luck!

So, What?

I visited a local tax preparer, figuring it best to pay \$69.95 and have a tax professional file the document I needed in order to get my \$600. Although a “Walk-Ins Welcome” sign hung on their door, the place was shut up tight. I called their number and was referred to a website that would allow me to file my own free Turbo Tax form.

Surely, they jested! Easy? No way. I am a geek.

So, I scanned various online reports. Here is the gist of what I found:

Online Insight

California Golden State Stimulus payments have gone to eligible people who’ve filed their tax returns. Others can expect their \$600 checks after filing their taxes.

People who receive SSI benefits can expect payments later this summer. They include around 5.7 million low-income Californians.

Californians with direct deposit accounts, who filed tax returns after March 2, can expect their stimulus payments within 45 days, or 60 days for those receiving paper checks.

Eligible Californians must be CalEITC recipients (Earned Income Tax Credits – earn \$30,000 or less per annum) or ITIN filers (Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers – earn less than \$75,000 per year).

Around 215,000 people fit both categories, since they are both CalEITC recipients who filed their tax returns with ITINs and made \$75,000 or less. In those cases, they will get a \$1,200 stimulus payment!

One website adds this comment: “The Democratic-controlled state legislature did this because most people who file their taxes this way were not eligible for federal stimulus checks Congress approved last year.” (They include undocumented workers but the homeless aren’t mentioned.)

The state advises that to be sure you receive your payment, you must file your 2020 tax return by October 15, 2021.

Maybe HC and I can figure whether, as SSI/SSP recipients, we’re eligible!

If you have similar questions, contact <https://www.ftb.ca.gov/about-ftb/newsroom/golden-state-stimulus/help.html#Contact-us-about-the-Golden-State-Stimulus>.

Call 1-800-852-5711 to chat.

Or for taxpayer assistance call 1-800-829-1040.

Cutting Through Bureaucratic Red Tape

Meanwhile, there's so much bureaucratic red tape to cut through, we're stuck on three points as we've returned to square one:

Is there anything we need to do in order to get our money?

If yes, how long must we wait once we've figured out how to do it?

If and when we do get our checks, will they be for \$600 or \$1,200?

Finally, the IRS warns: *"Be on the lookout for scam artists trying to use economic impact payments as cover for schemes to steal personal information and money. Remember, the IRS won't call or otherwise contact you asking for personal or bank account information. Also, watch out for emails with links or attachments claiming to have special information about impact payments or refunds."*

This advice also is true for the State of California Franchise Tax Board!

Stay tuned!

And if you're tired of the run-around I just described, order my little red oracle, *The Boondoggler's Bible – Cutting through Bureaucratic Red Tape*" (\$14 plus postage from <https://amzn.to/3xtm37g>). Proceeds from contributions help produce this column.

###

CREDITS:

Book cover art from Great Spirit Publishing, Inc. Photo of money courtesy of Google Free Images.

haiku trio by Wanda Sue Parrott.

###

"Homeless in Paradise" is a free public service self-funded and produced by independent journalist Wanda Sue Parrott. It appears in Facebook, Nextdoor, and *The Cedar Street Times* at www.cedarstreettimes.com and on private email lists. If interested in being added to the list, submit your request to 831-899-5887, amykitchenerfdn@hotmail.com. Copyright 2021 by Wanda Sue Parrott.