

IRS Promises Enhanced Services For Americans Abroad

By **Alex M. Parker**


Law360 (January 11, 2021, 5:43 PM EST) -- The Internal Revenue Service said it would step up efforts to provide access and communication to international taxpayers, including through employee video chats and expanded online accounts, according to a report issued to Congress on Monday.



A replica of the Statue of Liberty stands in Paris. The Internal Revenue Service listed international taxpayers among several "underserved" communities in a report issued in accordance with the 2019 Taxpayer First Act. (AP Photo/Michel Euler)

International taxpayers are among several "underserved" communities that the agency said it hoped to reach with new efforts. Others include low-income taxpayers, the elderly, armed services members and Native Americans.

"Nonresident individuals and businesses with a connection to the United States have unique tax considerations and may have difficulty accessing IRS services," the report said.

The report was required under the **Taxpayer First Act** , a 2019 law mandating that the IRS improve taxpayer service and ensure that enforcement is "fair and impartial," according to a statement from the IRS.

The agency said it hoped to improve online access for those currently unable to sign on due to foreign telephone numbers or foreign financial accounts, while also promoting online filing. According to the report, only 48.4% of individual taxpayers living abroad file electronically, compared with 88.3% of domestic taxpayers.

The IRS also said it would create new "virtual discussion forums" for international taxpayers to discuss questions or concerns.

American Citizens Abroad, an advocacy group for U.S. taxpayers living in foreign jurisdictions, praised the IRS report. The group said it provided input to the agency about how to best improve service.

Areas such as "facilitating the ability of international taxpayers to have enhanced online capabilities for filing" and easier authentication of accounts are "excellent starting points for improving

servicing," the group said.

"The ACA will continue to work with the IRS on further enhancements and improvements, in particular those related to improved outreach so that international taxpayers can get answers to their filing questions and easily access information," the organization said in a statement provided to Law360.

--Editing by Neil Cohen.

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