

# Unpaid Debt Can Affect Your Refund

If you owe a debt that's past-due, it can reduce your federal tax refund. The Treasury Department's Offset Program can use all or part of your refund to pay outstanding federal or state debt.

Here are five facts to know about tax refunds and 'offsets.'

1. The Bureau of Fiscal Service runs the [Treasury Offset Program](#).
2. Debts such as past due child support, student loan, state income tax or unemployment compensation may reduce your refund. BFS may use part or all of your tax refund to pay the debt.
3. You'll receive a notice if BFS offsets your refund to pay your debt. The notice will list the original refund and offset amounts. It will also include the agency that received the offset payment and their contact information.
4. If you believe you don't owe the debt or you want to dispute it, contact the agency that received the offset. You should not contact the IRS or BFS.
5. If you filed a joint tax return, you may be entitled to part or all of the refund offset. This rule applies if your spouse is solely responsible for the debt. To request your part of the refund, file [Form 8379](#), Injured Spouse Allocation.