



## ACI Worldwide Survey Shows Nearly 40% of Taxpayers Will Use Refunds for Debt Relief

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*Digital and alternative payment methods continue to increase in popularity among younger taxpayers*

OMAHA, Neb.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Apr. 10, 2025-- A new [income tax survey](#) from [ACI Worldwide](#) (NASDAQ: ACIW), an original innovator in global payments technology, developed in partnership with [YouGov](#), shows that nearly 40% of taxpayers would use their tax refund to pay debt (e.g., credit cards, loans, etc.), suggesting that the inflationary economy is eroding disposable income as Americans turn to tax refunds for debt relief. The survey also reveals that 44% of respondents chose to save their tax refunds, signaling a growing sense of financial caution and declining economic optimism.

This year's survey also highlights an uptick in digital payment methods, with 65% of respondents preferring to pay digitally and paper-based checks declining year-over-year (YoY) to only 15%, largely contributed by Baby Boomers and Gen X. Alternative payment methods such as PayPal, GooglePay and ApplePay continue to be favored by Gen Z compared to all other age demographics. The survey shows a similar trend when it comes to receiving tax refunds, with 80% of respondents preferring refunds to be deposited electronically.

"As we enter the tax season, many Americans are looking to maximize their tax refunds and make smart financial decisions, whether it's paying off high-interest debt or building up their savings. This year's findings show that taxpayers are continuing to pivot to digital payment channels to pay taxes and receive their refunds quickly. ACI's digital payment solutions empower Americans to meet their tax obligations in a fast and secure manner and take control of their finances," said Ron Shultz, General Manager of ACI Speedpay.

Additionally, this year's survey shows lower awareness of common payment fraud schemes during tax season particularly among Gen Z respondents, underscoring the importance of consumer education as a vital defense tool against fraud. Among consumers who have experienced scams, one-third were phone and email scams involving fraudsters impersonating the IRS. The survey also shows a 3% jump in victims of identity theft, where a bad actor uses someone else's personal information to commit fraudulent activities.

"Tax season is a prime opportunity for scammers to target consumers who feel overwhelmed by the complexities and time pressures of filing. By using secure digital payment channels with robust verification capabilities, taxpayers can safeguard their financial information and ensure that their refunds and payments are handled safely and efficiently," added Shultz.

For over 20 years, ACI has supported the billing and payment needs of federal, state and local government entities with secure, Payment Card Industry-compliant solutions. ACI is one of two approved IRS service providers and one of the platforms taxpayers can use for IRS DirectPay. In recent years, ACI has added popular alternative payment methods such as PayPal, PayPal Credit and Venmo. ACI is the longest-tenured service provider for the IRS and has processed more than \$25 billion in IRS tax payments.

### Additional Survey Insights

- Top three ways respondents plan to file their taxes this year:
  - 39% will file electronically through popular software (e.g., TurboTax, HR Block, TaxSlayer)
  - 27% will file electronically or by mail through a professional (e.g., CPA, tax accountant)
  - 11% will file by mail/paper
- Top three ways respondents would spend their tax refund, if they received one:
  - 44% would deposit into a savings account
  - 39% would pay debt (e.g., credit cards, loans, etc.)
  - 20% would make minor purchases (e.g., clothing, sporting goods, etc.)
- Top three fraud experiences (even if they were unsuccessful)
  - 17% phone scams
  - 16% phishing scams
  - 13% identity theft

### Survey Methodology

This survey has been conducted using an online interview administered to members of the YouGov Plc panel of individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. Emails are sent to panelists selected at random from the base sample. The e-mail invites them to take part in a survey and provides a generic survey link. Once a panel member clicks on the link they are sent to the survey that they are most required for, according to the sample definition and quotas. (The sample definition could be "US adult population" or a subset such as "US adult females"). Invitations to surveys don't expire and respondents can be sent to any available survey. The responding sample is weighted to the profile of the sample definition to provide a representative reporting sample. The profile is normally derived from census data or, if not available from the census, from industry accepted data.

### About ACI Worldwide

[ACI Worldwide](#), an original innovator in global payments technology, delivers transformative software solutions that power intelligent payments orchestration in real time so [banks](#), [billers](#), and [merchants](#) can drive growth, while continuously modernizing their payment infrastructures, simply and [securely](#). With nearly 50 years of trusted payments expertise, we combine our global footprint with a local presence to offer enhanced payment experiences to stay ahead of constantly changing payment challenges and opportunities.

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