



## The U.S. Treasury Reminds You to “Go Direct”

The U.S. Department of the Treasury will be eliminating paper checks and switching to electronic payments by March 1, 2013 for those receiving federal benefits. Through their campaign “Go Direct” they are reminding individuals and agencies that work with federal benefit recipients to make the necessary preparations.

Anyone who has applied for benefits since May 1, 2011 already receives their benefits electronically, but those that were enrolled prior to May 1 need to select their electronic payment method. There are two electronic payment options, direct deposit into a bank or credit union account or a Direct Express Debit MasterCard. The Direct Express card was introduced in 2008 and more than 1.5 million beneficiaries have already signed up for it. People who have not made an electronic payment selection by March 1, 2013 will receive their money via the Direct Express card.

People who are applying for federal benefits for the first time will be prompted to choose an electronic payment method, but those already receiving benefits need to either call 800-333-1795, visit their local bank/credit union branch, go to a federal benefit agency office, or go to [www.godirect.gov](http://www.godirect.gov) to select their electronic payment method and, if chosen, sign up for the Direct Express card.

The Treasury Department made the decision to switch to electronic payments for several reasons. One reason is that it offers a safe and easy way to receive payments. It eliminates the risk of stolen or lost checks, helps protect people from financial crime, and provides them with more control over their money and immediate access to their funds from virtually anywhere. Problems with electronic payments are fewer and easier to track and resolve than problems with mailed checks. Another reason for making the switch is the significant savings it will offer the American taxpayer. It is estimated that this change will save \$120 million in costs associated with paper checks.

“Eight in ten federal benefit recipients already use direct deposit, and now millions of additional retirees, veterans and other Americans will also receive their money in the safest, most reliable way – electronically,” says Treasury Fiscal Assistant Secretary Richard L. Gregg. “This important change will provide significant savings to American taxpayers who will no longer incur the annual \$120 million price tag associated with paper checks and will save Social Security \$1 billion over the next ten years.”

Please remind any of your clients receiving federal benefits of this important change.

