



Illinois Department of Revenue

Federal/State Employment Taxes

Illinois Department of Revenue — Withholding Implementation Guide

January 2025

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Part I — General Information

Section 1 — Overview

Fed/State Employment Taxes (FSET) is an electronic filing and payment program for employment taxes. This program enables the filing of both federal and state employment tax returns using Extensible Markup Language (XML) “schemas” (record layouts) that have been developed for this purpose. Background on FSET and information regarding schemas can be found at www.statemef.com/fset_new.shtml.

The Illinois implementation of the FSET program accepts and acknowledges the electronic filing and payment of employer withholding Form IL-941, Illinois Withholding Income Tax Return; Form IL-941-X, Illinois Amended Withholding Income Tax Return; Form IL-501, Payment Coupon; and Form UI-3/40, Employer’s Contribution and Wage Report. Although this is a federal and state program, the state returns are transmitted directly to each participating state, rather than to the IRS. Illinois transmissions are sent to the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) using the internet to access the “Illinois Gateway.”

The program is open to software developers, transmitters, and payroll service providers who act as reporting agents in accordance with IRS Revenue Procedure 2012-32, 2012-34 I.R.B 267.

The IRS defines “reporting agents” (RAs) as companies (not individuals) that perform payroll services for other businesses. The FSET program is also open to large employers who want to develop their own software. Individual business taxpayers who want to participate must select and use the services of a participating RA.

All participants (except taxpayers using an RA) must preregister with Illinois using, the Business Electronic Filing Enrollment Application located on [MyDevPortal](#). Software developers and transmitters use their IRS assigned electronic filing identification number (EFIN) / electronic transmitter identification number (ETIN) and are required to perform acceptance testing. Upon registration, transmitters are assigned passwords for Illinois communications. RAs select a single “signature code” (electronic signature) that they will use to sign all returns and payment authorizations they submit on behalf of their clients. RAs must obtain [Form IL-8655](#), Reporting Agent Electronic Services Authorization, from a taxpayer prior to acting on behalf of that taxpayer for Illinois payments and filings. **The IL-8655s are retained by the RA unless it is requested by IDOR.**

Part I — General Information

Section 2 — Contact Information

General Questions — Withholding Income Tax:

TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE DIVISION
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
PO BOX 19044
SPRINGFIELD IL 62794-9044
1 800 732-8866 or 217 782-3336
1 800 544-5304 — TTY
www.tax.illinois.gov

General Questions — for Illinois FSET or enrollment using the Business Electronic Filing Enrollment Application located on MyDevPortal:

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE DIVISION
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
PO BOX 19479
SPRINGFIELD IL 62794-9479
217 524-4767 or 1 866 440-8680 (8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)
Rev.ILDOR.FSET@illinois.gov

Technical Questions or system failures — Illinois Gateway:

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE SUPPORT
Rev.ECSTech@illinois.gov.

Please include in the subject line of your email “Illinois Gateway questions” in order to serve you better.

Technical Questions — regarding FSET schemas or acknowledgments for withholding:

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE DIVISION
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
PO BOX 19479
SPRINGFIELD IL 62794-9479
217 524-4767 or 1 866 440-8680 (8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)
Rev.ILDOR.FSET@illinois.gov

General Questions — Unemployment Insurance (FSET program only):

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
33 SOUTH STATE ST,
CHICAGO IL 60603
1 800 247-4984 Option 2 Employer Tax Assistance (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

If you have a question about a specific tax return or payment, it will expedite matters if you have a confirmation number or a SubmissionId to identify the item in question.

Part I — General Information

Section 3 — Enrollment for Electronic Filing

All participants must be enrolled to be accepted into the Illinois FSET electronic filing program. This includes Reporting Agents, large employers, software developers, and any participant who is transmitting directly to IDOR (either for themselves or for others).

To enroll, complete the Business Electronic Filing Enrollment Application located on MyDevPortal.

Participants who are software developers and/or transmitters that will transmit directly to the “Illinois Gateway” **must enroll using their IRS-assigned EFIN and ETIN**. They will also have to successfully complete testing to be accepted in the program. A “test” password will be assigned for this purpose upon registration and a test package is available on our website.

Once testing is successfully completed, a “production” password is assigned to approved transmitters. The ID numbers and passwords are unique for each transmitter and cannot be transferred among participants. The passwords must be kept secure. To access our internet gateway, all transmitters must use their ETIN and either the test or the production password.

Participants must submit a revised Business Electronic Filing Enrollment Application to IDOR to update the information contained on their most current enrollment form when there are changes involving:

- the participant’s name, the firm name, or doing business as (DBA) name(s);
- any address, telephone, or contact representative;
- Federal Employer’s Identification Number (FEIN);
- IRS-assigned EFIN or ETIN;
- the electronic filing functions performed; or
- the electronic signature code or person authorized to sign.

Section 4 — Electronic Signatures

All electronic returns filed must include an electronic signature that authenticates the participant. Participants must identify their electronic signatures on the electronic filing enrollment form. An authorized officer or other individual responsible for filing returns or other documents for the participant must also sign the electronic filing enrollment form.

Note: Participants enrolling as Reporting Agents must sign all returns and payment authorizations on behalf of their clients, using a single electronic signature. They must obtain [Form IL-8655](#), Reporting Agent Electronic Services Authorization, from each client and **retain the form** subject to inspection by IDOR and the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES).

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The participant's electronic signature is to be used in lieu of a written signature when filing electronic returns or payment authorizations. The effect of including a valid electronic signature as part of a transmission has the same legal effect as the participant having signed the returns or authorizations.

An electronic return or payment authorization will be considered unsigned unless the participant's electronic signature is included and received as part of the file. An electronic signature is considered valid from the time it is registered by IDOR and until:

- IDOR receives a written request from the participant to have that their electronic signature invalidated. To continue electronic filing, the participant must submit a revised Business Electronic Filing Enrollment Application and identify a new electronic signature.
- the participant submits a revised Business Electronic Filing Enrollment Application and has identified a new electronic signature on that form.
- the participant's signature authorization has been revoked or suspended.

Signature Fields in the Schema

- **OnlineFiler**
Located under the ReturnHeaderState, the OriginatorTypeCd tag should contain OnlineFiler. In the Signature tag under StateGeneralInformation, ReturnSigner, we expect to find the PIN of the online filer.
- **ReportingAgent and ERO Model**
Located under the TransmissionHeader, the AgentIdentifier tag should contain the EFIN and the ReportingAgentSignature tag should contain the reporting agent signature code. For Illinois, this is the 6-byte signature code the reporting agent selected when completing Form IL-8663-B.

Since we validate the Reporting Agent and ERO Model Signature at the Transmission Level, this limits the transmission to one reporting agent or ERO signature per transmission.

Part I — General Information

Section 5 — Payment Information

The Illinois FSET program provides for electronic payment of employer taxes by electronic funds transfer (EFT) using the ACH debit option. Debit authorization information may be transmitted within the electronic return data or as a stand-alone payment transaction for both withholding and unemployment insurance payments.

Debit information includes payment amount, payment date, and all banking information necessary to process the payment, including routing and account numbers. Use of the debit option does not require pre-registration for EFT by business taxpayers who are using an RA to submit filings and payments on their behalf.

The ACH credit option is available for withholding payments only. Large employers or reporting agents that have clients who want to use this option should contact the IDOR's Electronic Payments Section for further details. Use of the credit option requires pre-registration in our EFT Program at the business taxpayer level.

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Section 6 — Timeliness and Date Received of Return and Payment

Return

To be considered timely filed, a return must be acknowledged as accepted, or accepted with errors, no later than 11:59 p.m. (Central Standard Time) on the due date. This also applies to the retransmission of returns that were previously acknowledged as rejected. The IDOR Illinois Gateway records the date and time a transmission is complete. If a return is acknowledged as accepted or accepted with errors, this date and time is used as the date and time the return is received by Illinois. If a return is acknowledged as rejected, the return is considered not filed.

Participants should ensure that the return transmission is started early enough to be completed **prior to** the end of the day (11:59 p.m. Central Standard Time) on the return due date. To avoid late filing, it is recommended that participants schedule transmissions to allow for timely correction and retransmission in the case of a rejected transaction.

Payment

An electronic payment initiated on the due date for the next available settlement date will be considered timely paid. We recommend payments be initiated one or two days before the due date for settlement on the due date.

Note: These constraints for timely payment apply to IDOR debit authorizations, whether they are received embedded within a return filing or as a stand-alone payment transaction.

Participants should ensure that the debit authorization data contains a payment date no later than the due date. To avoid late payment, IDOR recommends that participants schedule debit authorization transmissions to allow for timely correction and retransmission in the case of a rejected debit transaction.

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Section 7 — Monitoring and Suspension

IDOR will monitor the quality of electronic transmissions. If the quality is unacceptable, IDOR will contact the electronic filer, software developer, or transmitter. IDOR will also monitor complaints about electronic filers and issue warning or suspension letters as appropriate. IDOR reserves the right to suspend the electronic filing privilege of any electronic filer, software developer, or transmitter who varies from the requirements, specifications, and procedures stated in this guide or any corresponding administrative rules, or who does not consistently transmit error-free returns. When suspended, the electronic filer, software developer, or transmitter will be advised of the requirements for reinstatement into the program.

Part I — General Information

Section 8 — Transmission Information

General Guidelines

Files may contain only one type of document. For example, a file may contain only Forms IL-941, only Forms IL-501, or only stand-alone debit payment authorizations. However, a file of only debit authorizations may contain payments that apply to more than one form type. For example, a debit file may contain authorizations for payments to be applied to any combination of Forms IL-941 and IL-501. Stand-alone debit authorizations cannot be intermingled in a file with returns.

A debit authorization may also be embedded within a form filing. A file containing Forms IL-941 may have documents with and without embedded debit authorizations intermingled. However, there cannot be a stand-alone debit authorization following a return document.

Once a file is successfully transmitted, each form filing and payment authorization will be acknowledged independently. If a form filing is acknowledged as rejected, the acknowledgment will reflect the errors causing the rejection. The filing should be corrected and retransmitted. If a rejected form filing includes an embedded debit authorization, the payment is also rejected and should be included in the retransmitted form filing.

A form filing with an embedded debit authorization may be acknowledged as accepted or accepted with errors, but the debit authorization will be independently evaluated and may be rejected although the form filing itself was not. In this case, the acknowledgment will reflect the acceptance of the return and the rejection of the payment, along with the errors that caused the payment rejection. The debit authorization should be corrected and retransmitted as a stand-alone debit authorization in a file of only debit authorizations.

Stand-alone debit authorizations may be accepted, accepted with error, or rejected. If a stand-alone debit authorization is acknowledged as rejected, the acknowledgment will reflect the errors causing the rejection. The debit authorization should be corrected and retransmitted.

Original transmissions and retransmissions of rejected transactions must be received based on the criteria specified in “Section 6 — Timeliness and Date Received of Return and Payment” above.

Part I — General Information

Section 8 — Transmission Information (cont.)

Schema Version

FSET transmissions to IDOR have required schema version FSETV5.6 for transmissions of IL-501, IL-941 returns, and IL-941-X returns.

Transmitters should take special note of the fact that the FSETV5.6 gateway determines whether a transmission is processed as a test or production file solely through the use of the transmitter's password. Transmitters should have both test and production passwords available. The value of the "ProcessType" element within the XML header is always overridden by the type of the transmitter password.

Transmission Protocol

FSET returns must be transmitted to and from the IDOR Gateway server via the Internet using Secure Socket Layer (SSL) technology. File transmissions must use the https post method. This type of transmission provides secure data exchange by strongly encrypting the data stream in both directions according to the SSL protocol.

Transmissions should be posted to <https://biz.revenue.state.il.us/il/gateway>.

Before users can transmit files, they must register with IDOR to register their IRS ETIN and obtain their passwords. Transmitters should receive both test and production passwords.

The Gateway conforms to standard http protocols. For fuller documentation regarding the http specification in general, refer to the World Wide Consortium website at <http://www.w3c.org>.

In particular, for documentation regarding the http protocol, see RFC 2616: Hypertext Transfer Protocol – HTTP/1.1 at <https://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2616.txt>.

For documentation regarding http authentication protocols, see RFC 2617L: HTTP Authentication: Basic and Digest Access Authentication at <https://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2617.txt>.

The Gateway uses basic authentication, which is made secure by the SSL encryption. The ETIN and password are applied to the http transmission headers in the form of a standard basic authentication header. The SSL protocol guarantees that the ID and password are also encrypted during transmission. As is standard practice, the basic authentication header must be base-64 encoded. The Gateway supports both challenge-response and pre-emptive authentication.

Part I — General Information

Section 8 — Transmission Information (cont.)

Gateway Practices

The FSETV5.6 Gateway adheres to the following practices:

- All transmissions or requests to the Gateway occur in a single request-response https session.
- No cookies are placed on the users' computers. No session tracking is required, and as a result, cookies are not needed.
- Only one XML file may be transmitted per session. To enforce this rule, the Gateway does not allow MIME, DIME, or MTOM attachments for FSETV5.6 transmissions.

Transmission Example

The transmission stream format will look similar to the following example (with comment lines removed):

```
----- transmission http headers -----  
  
POST /il/gateway HTTP/1.0  
Host: biz.revenue.state.il.us  
Authorization: Basic aWRvcjpub25l  
Accept: text/plain, text/html, text/xml  
X-eFileRequestCode: 12345.6789  
Content-Length: 6605  
  
----- transmission data follows here -----  
  
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>  
<?ILDOR fset="5.6"?>  
----- more xml data goes here -----
```

Actual data contained within the example are for illustration. Complete examples of the xml data part of the transmission are available.

The “Authorization” header contains the transmitter’s user ID and password in the standard Base64 encoding of basic authentication.

It is important that transmitters supply a “Content-Length” header and give it a value equal to the total number of bytes in the transmission starting with the line containing

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>.
```

The gateway uses the “Content-Length” header value to verify receipt of the entire transmission and will return an error if the total bytes received do not match this value. It is the responsibility of the transmitter to make sure this value is correct.

Part II — Illinois Department of Revenue — Withholding

Section 8 — Transmission Information (cont.)

Transmission Format

Each transmission to the Gateway must have one extended HTTP transmission header called “X-eFileRequestCode,” which the Gateway uses to decide if a transmission is a request to transmit a file or to pick up an acknowledgment. The X-eFileRequestCode header appears in the transmission stream at the http transmission header level. It is required.

In order to send a file to the Gateway, the value of the X-eFileRequestCode header should be set to some unique value other than the reserved keywords “ILSend,” “ILAck,” or “ILLastAck.” The value given to the X-eFileRequestCode header serves the purpose of identifying the transmission to the transmitter when the transmission receipt is returned to the transmitter. This value will be echoed back to the transmitter in the Acknowledgment One response as detailed below. It is strongly suggested that the transmitter set the value of the X-eFileRequestCode header to the same value as the TransmissionId element that occurs with the xml transmission header of the current transmission.

HttpPost Utility Program

IDOR has an HttpPost Utility Program available for use that transfers files to and from IDOR's Gateway server via the Internet using Secure Socket Layer (SSL) technology. The utility runs as a stand-alone application. The utility supports both a graphical user interface (GUI) mode of operation, as well as a command line mode suitable for batch processing. Installation consists in copying the executable file, HttpPost.exe, to an empty directory or folder. For convenience in launching the application in its GUI mode, place shortcuts to the executable on the desktop or in the START menu. Simply launching the executable without command line arguments starts the application in its GUI mode.

You can download a free copy of this [utility program](#) and its complete [instructions](#). You may also use your own program for transmitting files if you choose.