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How to Get Your Immigration Bond Money Back

Understanding the Immigration Bond Refund Process

An immigration bond is money posted with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to allow an individual to be released from immigration detention while their immigration case is pending. The purpose of the bond is to ensure that the individual complies with the conditions established by ICE and, when applicable, appears for all required immigration court hearings or follows any other conditions associated with the bond.

After an immigration case has been completed, there are still several steps that must occur before the bond money can be refunded. The person who paid the bond, known as the **obligor**, remains responsible under the bond until U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) determines that all of the bond's conditions have been satisfied and officially cancels the bond. Only after ICE issues **Form I-391, Notice – Immigration Bond Cancelled**, can the refund process begin. If the bond qualifies for a refund, the money is returned to the obligor—the individual or entity that originally posted the bond.

Whether a bond is eligible for a refund depends on the type of bond that was posted and whether all of its conditions have been fulfilled. For example, with a **delivery bond**, the individual must comply with the conditions of release, including appearing before the Immigration Court and reporting to ICE when required. For a **voluntary departure bond**, the individual must depart the United States within the time allowed and provide the required proof of departure. If ICE determines that the conditions of the bond were not satisfied, it may declare the bond **breached**, which may result in the loss of the bond money.

Your Immigration Case Has Ended. What Happens Next?

If your immigration case has been completed and you believe all of the bond conditions have been satisfied, follow the steps below to request your refund.

Step 1: Confirm That ICE Has Cancelled the Bond

Before a refund can be issued, ICE must first determine that all of the conditions of the bond have been satisfied. Once ICE completes its review, it will formally cancel the bond by issuing **Form I-391, Notice – Immigration Bond Cancelled**.

Form I-391 is one of the most important documents in the refund process. It serves as official confirmation that the bond obligation has ended, that the obligor is no longer responsible under the bond, and that the refund process may begin. Without the bond cancellation, ICE cannot issue a refund.

Depending on how the bond was originally posted, ICE may send **Form I-391** by regular mail or electronically through the **CeBONDS** system. **CeBONDS** is ICE's online bond management portal, which allows individuals who posted a bond electronically to receive notices and manage certain bond-related documents online.

If you posted your bond through CeBONDS, you may receive an email or electronic notification advising you that a new document is available. Be sure to log in to your CeBONDS account promptly to review and acknowledge the notice. You will need a copy of **Form I-391** to complete your refund request.

If you have not received Form I-391 within a reasonable period after your immigration case has concluded, you should contact the local **ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO)** office that handled your case to determine whether the bond has been cancelled or whether additional information is needed before the cancellation can be issued.

Step 2: Gather the Required Documents

Once you have received **Form I-391**, gather the documents needed to request your refund. In most cases, your refund packet should include:

- Form I-391, Notice – Immigration Bond Cancelled;
- The original **Form I-305 (Receipt of Immigration Officer)** that you received when the bond was posted;
- A valid government-issued photo identification;
- Documentation showing the outcome of your immigration case, if requested; and
- Your current mailing address and contact information.

Lost Your Original Form I-305?

If you no longer have your original **Form I-305**, you may still request your refund.

Instead of the original receipt, complete **Form I-395, Affidavit in Lieu of Lost Receipt**. This form is available on the ICE website and must be signed in the presence of a **notary public**. Once notarized, Form I-395 replaces the original receipt for purposes of requesting your refund.

Special Instructions for Voluntary Departure Bonds

If your bond was posted because you were granted **Voluntary Departure**, additional steps are required before ICE can cancel the bond and authorize the refund.

After departing the United States **within the time ordered by the Immigration Judge or the Board of Immigration Appeals**, you should contact the nearest **United States Embassy or Consulate** in the country where you arrived to verify your departure. Many embassies and consulates require an appointment and will ask you to present documentation showing that you departed the United States as required.

During your appointment, the consular officer may complete or verify **Form I-210, Voluntary Departure Verification**, confirming that you complied with your voluntary departure order.

You should be prepared to provide documents such as:

- Your valid passport;
- A copy of your Voluntary Departure Order;
- Form I-210, if provided with your departure instructions;
- Your airline ticket and original boarding pass;
- Passport entry and exit stamps;
- Form I-94, if applicable; and
- Any additional documents requested by the Embassy or Consulate.

The terms of a voluntary departure bond generally require proof of departure to be provided to ICE **within 30 days after the voluntary departure date**. Once ICE receives satisfactory evidence that you departed on time and complied with the voluntary departure order, it will issue **Form I-391, Notice – Immigration Bond Cancelled**, allowing the refund process to begin.

Step 3: Submit Your Refund Request

After receiving **Form I-391**, the obligor should prepare and mail a complete refund packet.

Your packet should generally include:

- Form I-391, Notice – Immigration Bond Cancelled;
- The original **Form I-305 (Receipt of Immigration Officer)**; or
- A notarized **Form I-395 (Affidavit in Lieu of Lost Receipt)** if the original receipt has been lost; and
- Any additional documentation requested by ICE.

Where Should I Mail My Refund Request?

Mail your completed refund packet to:

**Department of Homeland Security
Financial Service Center – Bond Unit
P.O. Box 5000
Williston, VT 05495-5000**

To help protect your documents, it is recommended that you mail your packet using **Certified Mail** or another service that provides tracking and proof of delivery. Keep copies of everything you submit for your records.

Once the Financial Service Center receives your completed refund packet, processing generally takes **several months**. Although many refunds are processed sooner, delays of **up to six months or longer** are not uncommon.

If your refund is approved, you will receive a check for:

- The original bond amount; and
- Any applicable interest earned while the funds were held by the U.S. Treasury.

Step 4: Keep Your Mailing Address Current

The refund check will be mailed to the **obligor**, the individual or entity who originally posted the bond.

If you move before receiving your refund, you should immediately submit **Form I-333, Obligor Change of Address**, to ICE. Updating your address helps prevent delays and ensures that important notices—including your refund check—are mailed to the correct location.

Step 5: Track Your Refund

If your immigration bond **has not yet been cancelled** and you have questions about the status of your case or your bond, contact the **local ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO)** office that handled your case.

If you have **already received Form I-391 (Notice – Immigration Bond Cancelled)** or **Form I-323 (Notice – Immigration Bond Breached)** and your questions relate specifically to your refund, you should contact the **Department of Homeland Security Financial Service Center – Bond Unit**.

Telephone: 877-491-6521 (Select **Option 1**)

Email: BondRefund.HelpDesk@ice.dhs.gov

Although there is **no legal deadline** for requesting your refund after the bond has been cancelled, it is strongly recommended that you submit your refund packet **as soon as possible**. Waiting too long may make the process more difficult because documents may become harder to locate, mailing addresses may change, and additional follow-up may be required before the refund can be issued.

Summary

Receiving an immigration bond refund is **not automatic**. Even after your immigration case has ended, ICE must determine that all bond conditions have been satisfied and formally cancel the

bond before a refund can be issued. Once you receive **Form I-391**, promptly submit your refund request, keep copies of all documents, maintain a current mailing address with ICE, and follow up if necessary.

By understanding each step of the process and responding promptly to any requests from ICE or the Financial Service Center, you can help minimize delays and improve the likelihood of receiving your refund as quickly as possible.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who receives the refund?

Only the **obligor**—the person or organization that originally posted the immigration bond—is entitled to receive the refund.

Will I receive interest on my bond?

Yes. If you posted a **cash bond** directly with ICE and the bond is cancelled, the refund generally includes the original bond amount together with any applicable interest earned while the funds were held by the U.S. Treasury.

What if I lost my bond receipt?

You may still request your refund by submitting a **notarized Form I-395 (Affidavit in Lieu of Lost Receipt)** instead of the original **Form I-305**.

How long does the refund process take?

Most refunds are processed within **several months**, although delays of **up to six months or longer** can occur after the Financial Service Center receives a complete refund packet.

What happens if ICE declares the bond breached?

If ICE determines that the conditions of the bond were not satisfied, it may issue **Form I-323, Notice – Immigration Bond Breached**. A breached bond may result in the loss of the bond money. If you believe the breach determination was made in error, you may have the right to seek administrative review or appeal.