The Internal Revenue Service seeks civic-minded volunteers to serve on the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP), which listens to taxpayers, identifies key issues and makes recommendations for improving IRS service.

“TAP members are your friends and neighbors, walking in the shoes of the average taxpayer. A better understanding of how to serve the taxpayer well is a key to sound tax administration,” said Doug Shulman, IRS Commissioner.

TAP members are being sought for Minnesota, among other states. TAP provides a forum for taxpayers from all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. TAP is a federal advisory committee that reports annually to the Treasury Department, the IRS and the National Taxpayer Advocate, which is an independent organization within the IRS. The National Taxpayer Advocate provides oversight and funding of TAP.

“As the IRS continues to examine taxpayers’ needs in the area of service, the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel has emerged as a vital source for gathering and providing information from the perspective of taxpayers,” said Nina E. Olson, National Taxpayer Advocate. “TAP’s role will ultimately aid taxpayers by helping the IRS to provide them with the top quality service they deserve."

To be a member of TAP you must be a U.S. citizen, current with your tax obligations, able to commit 300 to 500 hours during the year and pass an FBI criminal background check. New TAP members will serve a three-year term starting in December 2009. Anyone chosen as an alternate would be considered to fill any vacancies that open during the next two years.

Applications to become a member of TAP will be accepted until April 30. Applications are available online at www.improveirs.org or by calling 1-888-912-1227.