



NICOLE GALLOWAY, CPA
Missouri State Auditor

January 13, 2020

Mr. Kenneth Zellers, Director
Missouri Department of Revenue
301 W. High Street, Room 670
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Dear Director Zellers:

The Missouri State Auditor's Office continues to receive complaints from Missouri taxpayers regarding late tax refunds that were due to them last year. There are Missourians who are waiting nearly a year to receive the money they are owed from their government. Additionally, taxpayers continue to describe confusion and a lack of communication.

Since May 15, 2019, this office has received 3,351 complaints from taxpayers regarding delayed refunds by the Missouri Department of Revenue. Of those taxpayers, 2,510 gave this office permission to refer their complaints to the department. We asked that the department contact these complainants as quickly as possible in an attempt to rectify their individual tax refund delay.

While those taxpayers have informed us that they have been contacted by the department after our referral, the State Auditor's Office hotline continues to receive calls and e-mails related to delayed 2018 tax refunds. Recent media reports have indicated that thousands more may still be waiting for their refunds.¹

The complaints to this office include individuals who say that they have been waiting for nearly a year for their property tax credit (also known as the "circuit breaker"). As you know, this tax credit is intended to assist certain low-income senior citizens and individuals who are 100% disabled. These calls and emails are coming in on nearly a daily basis.

Additionally, we frequently received complaints about lack of information provided by the department. Instead of taxpayers being able to speak with someone from the department, they are provided with a generic response from an automated system that provides little to no information. When taxpayers do speak to a representative, they are provided with inconsistent information. Some report that they are told everything has been received and their refund is being processed only to later be told they need to send additional information. Others report that they were told to expect their refund in 12 weeks, but the refund never arrived.

¹ "'Show me the money': Thousands of Missourians still waiting for their 2018 tax refunds", WDAF-TV, Jan. 3, 2020; "Thousands have yet to receive 2018 Missouri state tax refunds", KSHB-TV, Jan. 2, 2020

Most recently, we have heard from frustrated taxpayers who are no longer able to review their information using the department's online refund tracking system. These taxpayers have been checking the status of their 2018 refund since early 2019, but it appears the system will only permit them to check for a 2019 tax year refund. Unfortunately, these taxpayers are still waiting on their refund from 2018.

As this office continues to receive these complaints, we are asking for specific information related to actions by the department to address these serious concerns:

1. When will the process of paying taxpayers their 2018 refunds be complete?
2. As there are still pending 2018 refunds and the online tracker is no longer available on the website for these individuals, how can taxpayers easily access up to date information on their return?
3. What steps has the department taken to address the issues that have resulted in these extreme delays?
4. What steps has the department taken to ensure that taxpayers filing a property tax credit with their 2019 return will not face such extreme delays?
5. Can taxpayers expect efficiency from the department in processing 2019 tax year returns?

Please provide a response to our office by January 27, 2020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael A. Moorefield", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael A. Moorefield
Chief of Staff

c: Office of Governor Michael L. Parson