

“Where’s My Refund” online tool

Due to a technical issue, our “Where’s My Refund?” online tool has mistakenly advised a number of taxpayers that we have not received their Rhode Island personal income tax returns – even though the taxpayers, or their preparers, have filed the returns (and, in the case of electronically filed returns, have received electronic acknowledgements for those returns).

Taxpayers should be assured that, despite the erroneous message they may have received through the online tool, their returns have been received and are being processed. The erroneous message was caused by a technical problem which we expect to correct within 24 hours. We apologize for any inconvenience this problem has caused. The tool is at: <https://www.ri.gov/taxation/refund/>

Refund delays

We appreciate everyone’s patience during this filing season as we work to resolve a number of issues that have delayed the processing of some refunds. As the table below shows, we have issued more than \$140 million in refunds so far this season to more than 284,000 taxpayers.

Refund totals		
	<i>Filing season 2015</i>	<i>Filing season 2016</i>
Number of refunds issued:	305,354	284,844
Total refund dollars issued:	\$159,149,458.54	\$140,558,685.70
Average refund:	\$521.20	\$493.46
<small>Cumulative numbers for tax year 2014 refunds issued during filing season through April 3, 2015, and for tax year 2015 refunds issued during filing season through April 8, 2016. (“Filing season” typically runs mid-January to mid-April.) Numbers are before interest and offset, and do not include refunds for tax years other than those stated.</small>		

Still, some taxpayers have not received their refunds yet. This delay has been caused by a number of factors, including the following:

- We have heightened our scrutiny of returns and refunds due to a sharp increase in the number of fraudulent returns, an issue that is being faced by the Internal Revenue Service and by many states nationwide.
- We have seen a higher volume of returns this season.
- This is the first tax season that we have used our new computer system – including its high-speed scanner system – to process personal income tax returns, and we are working to resolve issues that typically arise when converting records over to a new computer system.

We are gradually increasing the number of returns processed, the number of refunds issued, and the number of phone calls answered. We have reassigned some staff within the Division to help answer more calls, and some staff have volunteered to work overtime to help out in processing returns and refunds. We appreciate everyone’s patience as we make progress on these fronts – and we appreciate everyone’s understanding of our efforts to make the security of taxpayer information and refunds our top priority.