

Take Steps to Prevent Your Tax Return from Being Stolen

Kentuckians urged to file electronically, early to avoid falling victim to tax-theft

FRANKFORT, KY. (Feb. 15, 2018) – With tax season in full swing, Attorney General Andy Beshear and AARP Kentucky issued a scam alert to help Kentucky families protect their tax returns from being stolen by scammers.

Beshear and AARP said tax identity fraud occurs when someone uses your Social Security number to file a tax return in your name, before you file in order to steal your refund.

Tax-related scams, including identity fraud are commonly reported in Kentucky, with more than 120 reports made to the Office of the Attorney General last year, representing families in 43 counties.

“The best weapon in fighting tax-theft scammers is to file your return early, electronically and use official state and federal websites to monitor your refund,” said Beshear. “By filing early in the tax season, you can reduce your risk of identity theft by submitting your return before scammers. Waiting only gives con artists more time to steal your refund.”

“Fraud targeting taxpayers continues to run rampant nationwide. And 2017 was a runaway year for fraudsters, and with the amount of valid information they have on consumers, their attacks are just getting more sophisticated,” said AARP Kentucky State President Charlotte Whittaker. “If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam. Watch out for these two tax crimes making headlines: tax identity theft and the IRS imposter scam.”

Beshear and his Office of Senior Protection and Mediation recommends these tips from AARP to help Kentucky families avoid falling victim to tax-related identity theft.

1. **File early.** Beginning Jan. 29, 2018, the IRS and the state started accepting electronic filing of tax returns.
2. **Consider e-file.** To help file quickly, consumers may qualify for the state and IRS’s Free File programs, which allows the use of free, name-brand tax filing software. For more information on the IRS Free File program, [click here](#) and for information on the state program, [click here](#).
3. **Monitor your refund.** Review the status of your refund by visiting the IRS’s [Where’s My Refund?](#) website or take advantage of the [IRS2Go smartphone app](#). [Click here](#) to visit the state refund site.

Both the state and federal government continue to take steps to deter scammers and protect tax filers.

Beshear said the IRS might contact victims of tax fraud via mailed letter, while others may discover the fraud when they attempt to file their return.

Victims need to act quickly and follow these recommended steps:

Contact the IRS. To contact the IRS directly call, 800.908.4490. Contact the Kentucky Department of Revenue at 502.564.4581.

Follow the Attorney General's [Identity Theft Kit](#). Learn how to obtain an incident report of identity theft from your local law enforcement agency, place an immediate and free fraud alert on your credit file, order and review your credit reports, and create a comprehensive recovery action plan.

For additional information, visit the Office of the Attorney General's website at ag.ky.gov, the IRS site www.irs.gov/identitytheft and the Kentucky Department of Revenue at <http://revenue.ky.gov/>.

The filing deadline for federal and state individual income tax returns is Tuesday, April 17, 2018.

One of the critical missions of the Office of the Attorney General is to help Kentucky families and seniors recognize and avoid scams.