



# State of Missouri – 2021 Governor’s Award for Quality and Productivity

## NOMINATION FORM

### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

**Department:** Department of Revenue

**1. Project or team name:** Income Tax Season Secondments

**2. List the name of all team members, job titles, state agency department, and/or other organizations including public, private sector or business:** *(Please list alphabetically by last name – 2 to 20 team members maximum.)*

1. Joel Allison – Deputy Director, Taxation Division, DOR
2. Haley Bosch – Customer Service Representative, Processing Bureau, DOR
3. Arin Burnett – Customer Service Supervisor, Processing Bureau, DOR
4. May Chelle Carl – Customer Service Representative, Processing Bureau, DOR
5. Desi Carpenter – Lead Customer Service Representative, Income Tax Bureau, DOR
6. Karen Crull – Customer Service Representative, Processing Bureau, DOR
7. Jennifer Crump – Customer Service Representative, Processing Bureau, DOR
8. Miranda Darnel – Associate Customer Service Representative, Processing Bureau, DOR
9. Cindy Doss – Administrator, Processing Bureau, DOR
10. Samantha Farrow – Associate Customer Service Representative, Processing Bureau, DOR
11. Tucker Gehlert – Customer Service Manager, Processing Bureau, DOR
12. Mark Godfrey – Director, Taxation Division, DOR
13. Julia Lammers – Associate Customer Service Representative, Processing Bureau, DOR
14. Sydney Lepper – Associate Customer Service Representative, Processing Bureau, DOR
15. Leo Moore – Associate Customer Service Representative, Processing Bureau, DOR
16. Madasyn Phillips – Customer Service Representative, Processing Bureau, DOR
17. Elizabeth Robinson – Manager, Processing Bureau, DOR
18. Harrison Scott – Associate Customer Service Representative, Processing Bureau, DOR
19. Sydni Smith – Associate Customer Service Representative, Processing Bureau, DOR

**3. Nomination Category:** *(Check only one.)*

INNOVATION

CUSTOMER SERVICE

EFFICIENCY / PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

**4. Explain why you selected this category:**

The team used historical data about incoming work and current data about individual production to determine how many people we needed to address the influx of incoming returns and payments around the individual income tax filing deadline.

### II. BACKGROUND

**1. When did the team begin its work?**

January 2021

**2. What date did the team initiate the implementation phase of the project?**

May 1, 2021

**3. Is the project:**

Time Limited

Completed

Ongoing

### III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

#### 1. Why was the project necessary?

First, our customers deserve a quick turnaround time for their returns and payments, regardless of when they file. Second, our team needed to know how much flexibility we have in how we respond to incoming work. They can then use that knowledge to produce even better results with future projects. Third, we can move mountains if we use math; in our case: incoming returns and payments  $\div$  individual productivity = teammates needed.

#### 2. What were the primary goals of the project? (150 words or less.)

- Determine how many people would be required to open and process returns and payments filed around the individual income tax filing deadline;
- Cross educate enough teammates to address returns and payments as they came in ("run to the work") rather than wait and try to work down a backlog; and
- Show the team that what has always been, does not always have to be.

#### 3. Describe the project: (200 words or less.)

After researching how many people would be required to address the incoming returns and payments around the individual income tax filing deadline, the team identified and cross educated 150 additional teammates to help open mail, process returns and payments from May 19<sup>th</sup> to May 25<sup>th</sup>. This short Secondment (a temporary transfer to another role or business area away from a primary job) showed how our team can run to the work. We assembled enough team members to address the work as it came in rather than waiting to work down a backlog. As a result, we saw a decrease in processing time of at least 60% across all our workstreams.

#### 4. What technology, if any, was used in the development, implementation, maintenance or measurement of the project? (150 words or less.)

Excel spreadsheets and SharePoint

#### 5. Explain how the accomplishment of the team exceeds its regular duties and responsibilities. (150 words or less.)

Our team could have used the same number of people as last year. They could have accepted backlogs as inevitable. They could have said, "We'll get to it." They could have left up the barriers between bureaus and divisions that have existed for years. Their job descriptions could have read, "Input tax returns and payments into the system."

Instead, they took it upon themselves to transform our approach to the filing season deadline. They flipped the script, asking, "How many people would it take to handle all this work *as it comes in*?" They broke down barriers between bureaus and divisions. They thought beyond their own group and looked to the entire team as a whole. They sought to delight both internal and external customers.

#### 6. Which of the following describes the intended benefits of the project? (Check all that apply and provide an explanation. - 150 words or less)

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cost Reduction   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Time Savings | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increased Effectiveness |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improved Process | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Describe         |   |

#### Explain the intended benefits:

- 1) Process returns and payments faster this year than last year;
- 2) Delight our customers through quick, quality turnaround;

- 3) Show the team how to staff based on math;
- 4) Show the team that they can ensure that this year is not like last year; and
- 5) Reinvest our time in additional Secondments throughout the Department.

#### IV. RESULTS / MEASUREMENT

1. **Explain how the success of the project was measured and what outcomes were achieved.** (Explanation should not exceed 300-500 words.)

The quantitative success of the project was measured by turnaround time over seven separate workstreams (see Executive Summary). The qualitative success was measured by comments like the following from our team members on Secondment from other areas:

"This experience gave me a better understanding of how much incom[ing] mail we actually receive and why we give callers a processing time of 8-10 weeks normally during this time of year."

"It was nice to get to know the process of where returns go and how many paper returns we still actually receive."

2. **Are the benefits derived from this project:** (Check only one.)

Recurring                       One-time

3. **If recurring, how will the benefits be sustained?** (Explain in 150 words or less.)

Benefits will be sustained by repeating the Income Tax Secondment next year and incorporating a list of what went well and opportunities for improvement.

**What went well:** Team members owning a piece of the process (e.g., testing different ways of completing a task ahead of time to see which was more streamlined, setting up, labeling, sorting); positivity; progress updates announced mid-day and displayed on whiteboards; understanding priority of PO Boxes; and shifting resources.

**Improvements:** Visible check-in stations; large work area; clear designation of sorting duties; providing consistent answers through quality training; exclusively dedicating one whiteboard to progress reports; and ordering team T-shirts early

#### V. RECOGNITION / AWARDS

1. **Has this project previously been nominated for the Governor's Award for Quality and Productivity? If yes, when?**

No

2. **If yes, for which category was it nominated?**

3. **Has this project received any other awards or recognition? If yes, describe.**

It was highlighted in our Department newsletter and will be included in the Show Me Excellence Summit

**VI. NOMINATOR'S INFORMATION**

**Nominating Department:** Department of Revenue

**Name:** Lynn Kempker

**Signature:** 

**Telephone Number:** 573-751-5671

**E-Mail Address:** Lynn.Kempker@dor.mo.gov

**VII. DEPARTMENT COORDINATOR'S INFORMATION**

**Name:**

**Signature:**

**Telephone Number:**

**E-Mail Address:**

**VIII. DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR APPROVAL**

**Department Director's Name:**

**Signature:** 

Nomination must be signed **ONLY** by the Department Director to be eligible for consideration. Nominations not signed by the Department Director will be returned to the agency coordinator.



# State of Missouri

## 2021 Governor's Award for Quality and Productivity

### Executive Summary

**Project or Team Name:** Income Tax Season Secondments

**Nominator:** Lynn Kempker

**Nominating Department:** (Nominations must include names of all agencies/departments/organizations/businesses, etc.)

Department of Revenue

**Category:** Efficiency / Process Improvement

**Executive Summary:** Executive Summary page must be 500 words or less, 12 point, Times New Roman font, and left justified. **Attach the Executive Summary to the front of the nomination.**

The Department of Revenue receives approximately half a million paper Individual Income Tax and Property Tax Credit Claim returns each year. Approximately 110,000 of these returns are received the week of the filing deadline. In addition to tax returns, the DOR receives over 160,000 Individual Income Tax payments during the week of the filing deadline. These payments need to be opened and processed so that funds can be deposited timely. Historically, it took weeks upon weeks for the Taxation Division to open, sort, key, scan and process all of these returns and payments.

But what has always been, does not always have to be.

Leading up to the 2021 income tax season, the Taxation team researched the amount of mail that arrived each week during past tax seasons. Then, they measured how many returns and payments could be opened or processed by one person, in one day. By dividing incoming work by individual production, the team determined how many people it would take to open, sort, key, scan and process it all.

With that number in hand, the team asked each bureau within the Taxation Division, as well as other DOR divisions, if they could send teammates to help. These team members would be part of the Income Tax Secondment. A Secondment is defined as a temporary transfer to another role or business area away from your primary job. Seconded teammates receive first-hand experience of another industry, organization or job role. Ultimately, more than 150 team members from across the Department's four divisions joined the Secondment.

Weeks of meticulous planning went into the implementation of this initiative to ensure maximum efficiency. The team acquired additional tables and chairs, with help from FMDC. The team physically mapped out the workspaces beforehand, allowing them to know exactly what supplies they would need and how many to order. Staff training was conducted via WebEx prior to the start of the Secondment. To help prevent any hiccups, staff received a refresher on how to open certain types of mail. No detail was overlooked, including signage clearly marking the different processing areas, where resources were located, and even where team members should sit.

During the five working days of the Secondment, team members opened and sorted nearly 200,000 pieces of mail. Over 145,000 payments and 30,000 returns were input into the system during this week, in addition to all of the mail being opened. Since the team finished the final day of Secondment with zero pieces of unopened mail, the Return Processing Section was able to focus almost solely on processing the returns and remaining payments during the following week. As shown below, the processing time for all workstreams decreased by at least 60% from the prior year. We are reinvesting that time in new Secondments in other areas of the Division, in order to continue exceeding

our customers' expectations. We are living out our motto, "One Team, One Dream," as we strive to offer every customer the best experience, every time.

### Processing Timeframe Comparison from Filing Deadline (In days)

	2020	2021	% Decreased Timeframe
Payment Voucher Mail Opened	15	6	60%
Return Mail Opened	32	8	75%
IIT/PTC Returns Entered	40	16	60%
Composite Returns Entered	55	21	62%
Fiduciary Returns Entered	55	21	62%
Extension Requests Entered	82	23	72%
2015 & Prior Returns Entered	117	24	79%

**Video Summary:** A brief - no longer than three minute - video summary may also be submitted via a link. Submission of a video summary is optional.