



## Federation of Tax Administrators

444 North Capitol Street NW • Suite 348 • Washington, DC 20001 • 202-624-5890 • [taxadmin.org](http://taxadmin.org)

**Sharonne Bonardi**  
Executive Director

May 30, 2025

### For Immediate Release

Contact: Joe Starr at 202-964-5904 or at [joe.starr@taxadmin.org](mailto:joe.starr@taxadmin.org)

# Alabama Department of Revenue Named FTA Innovation and Excellence Award Winner Tax agency recognized for Where's My Refund IVR project

The Federation of Tax Administrators has named the Alabama Department of Revenue (ALDOR) an FTA Innovation and Excellence in Tax Administration Award winner for its Where's My Refund Interactive Voice Response (IVR) project.

ALDOR's old IVR system, which allowed taxpayers to call the department and check the status of their tax refund, went down in late 2023 after support for it discontinued. Getting the IVR back up and running quickly was crucial, to ensure the approximately 116,000 calls per month coming through the IVR lines were answered and to allow collections personnel assigned to answer those calls due to the down IVR to resume their regular duties.

With much brainstorming and research, the IVR was restored using AWS Connect and Amazon Lex, an AI-powered chatbot. This innovative solution was developed, tested, and deployed within just seven days, ensuring minimal disruption during the busy tax season.

"With this system, Alabama DOR has set a benchmark for innovation in taxpayer services," said FTA Executive Director Sharonne Bonardi. "Their ability to bring together all the right minds in tax and technology has led to this innovative new means of serving taxpayers better than ever before."

The new IVR system integrated with ALDOR's existing call center infrastructure and taxpayer portal, enabling taxpayers to access refund information quickly and efficiently. A Spanish version of the IVR was also implemented within a week, further enhancing accessibility.

Since its implementation, the IVR has handled approximately 4,000 calls daily, eliminating wait times and reducing the need for agent assistance. This allowed ALDOR employees reassigned to take calls during the brief downtime to focus back on their core responsibilities, such as processing refunds and conducting audits, leading to improved operational efficiency and employee morale.

"I am incredibly proud of the team who stepped up and did the necessary work to make this critical project a reality," said ALDOR Commissioner Vernon Barnett. "They not only met the tight deadline we set but they turned out a product that is exceeding expectations."

The project has demonstrated significant benefits, including enhanced customer satisfaction, increased revenue collection, and streamlined operations. During a single week in February 2025 alone, the IVR managed over 101,000 calls, including 1,522 Spanish-language inquiries.

The FTA Award for Innovation and Excellence in Tax Administration recognizes FTA member organizations leading the way in tax administration through projects and initiatives created to improve processes, transform systems and revolutionize how they work to deliver for the citizens they serve.

The Federation of Tax Administrators is a Washington DC based non-profit serving its government tax administration members from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, New York City, and Philadelphia. It provides its members with the knowledge, tools, and relationships in support of tax administration, which furthers voluntary compliance while preserving, protecting, and enhancing tax revenue.

###