**IRS Myths and Facts**

**IGNORE THE MYTHS**

The IRS WON’T take your home. The IRS hardly ever seizes people’s property. They will never take your house that you live in. If you owe more than $10,000, they may issue a Notice of Federal Tax Lien, which puts your debt on the public record, and means that money from selling your property goes towards your tax debt first.

The IRS WON’T put you in jail for owing taxes. You can never be incarcerated for being unable to pay your taxes (even if you owe a lot). Some crimes like tax fraud can carry prison sentences, but ordinary mistakes on personal income taxes aren’t criminal.

The IRS WON’T call you. The IRS communicates with taxpayers primarily through mail. Unless the IRS told you to expect a phone call, any call claiming to be from the IRS is likely a scam, and you should make sure not to share any personal information.

**WHAT DOES THE IRS DO?**

The IRS WILL take your future refunds. If you have a tax debt, the IRS will apply any refunds you are eligible for to the debt instead of giving them to you. Sometimes you can still get your refund if you have a financial emergency--consult a tax professional.

The IRS MAY take some of your wages or retirement social security income. If you owe a tax debt and the IRS believes you have the means to pay it, they have the power to "levy" a percentage of your wages or retirement social security income, or sometimes a bank account. However, they have to give you a written warning and a chance to appeal first.

**WHERE DO I GET HELP?**

The Low Income Taxpayer Clinic at Philadelphia Legal Assistance helps Philadelphia residents struggling with federal tax issues, including inability to pay. We are not part of the IRS. We also generally do not prepare taxes. Contact us through the main Philadelphia Legal Assistance intake line at 215-981-3800, Tuesday or Thursday 9:30 am - 12 pm, or come to our offices in person on Monday or Wednesday, 9:30 am - 12 pm, at 718 Arch St, Suite 300N.