

# Monroe County Tax Collector

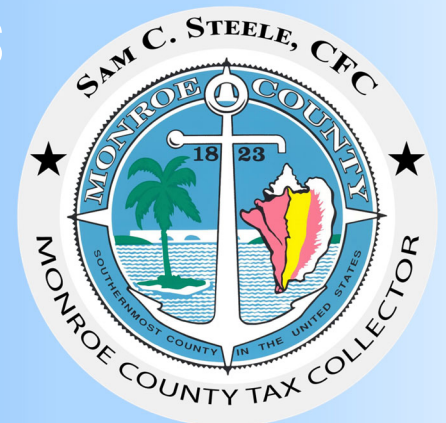


## A Report to Our Citizens

Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2020-2021

**Sam C. Steele, CFC**

Constitutional Tax Collector  
Serving Monroe County





## A Message From **Sam C. Steele, CFC**

I am pleased to present to you the 2020-2021 Annual Report. As your Constitutional Tax Collector, my team and I are honored to provide you with a wide variety of services, including real estate property and tangible personal property tax services, driver license services, motor vehicle and vessel registrations, and much more.

Within this report, you will learn about our performance and accomplishments for fiscal year 2021, and an easy-to-read accounting of the collection and distribution of your tax dollars for the benefit of Monroe County.

Since being duly sworn into office in January 2021, I have diligently worked to modernize and innovate office operations, improve efficiency, and expand access to services for Monroe County residents and taxpayers.

We collected a record-breaking \$10.5 million in commissions and fees, of which our agency returned \$5,513,708 back to the taxing authorities to the benefit of Monroe County's 82,000 residents. As an independent agency funded by the fees and commissions collected, we continue to strive to exceed expectations in customer service.

I hope that you find the information in this report valuable and insightful. I greatly appreciate the trust and confidence you have placed in my team and me. I am honored for the opportunity to serve as your Constitutional Tax Collector.

Respectfully,

*"My vision has been to innovate and modernize the Tax Collector's Office in order to create an even more efficient experience for the public. Through the evolution of technology, there is always an easier way to do something, and we should be applying this principle to the public's interaction with government agencies."*



## About the Constitutional Tax Collector

The Florida Constitution established the Tax Collector's Office as an independent agency in 1885. Constitutional offices are part of a system that limits (checks) the County Commission's power by having constitutional officers carry out governmental duties (balances). This separation frees the Tax Collector's Office from influence by local or state agencies that have the power to levy taxes.

In 2020, Sam C. Steele was elected unopposed to serve a four-year term. He officially became the youngest Constitutional Tax Collector to be elected in Monroe County and is currently the youngest Constitutional Tax Collector in the State of Florida.

Other constitutional officers serving Monroe County are the Clerk of the Court & Comptroller, Property Appraiser, Sheriff, and Supervisor of Elections.



## OFFICE LOCATIONS

### Key West Main Office

Harvey Government Center  
1200 Truman Ave., Suite 101  
Key West, FL 33040  
(305) 295-5000

### Key West Driver License Office

Searstown Shopping Center  
3304 N. Roosevelt Blvd.  
Key West, FL 33040  
(305) 293-6338

### Big Pine Key Satellite Office

Winn-Dixie Shopping Center  
247 Key Deer Blvd.  
Big Pine Key, FL 33043  
(305) 872-4751

### Marathon Branch Office

3015 Overseas Hwy  
Marathon, FL 33050  
(305) 289-6034

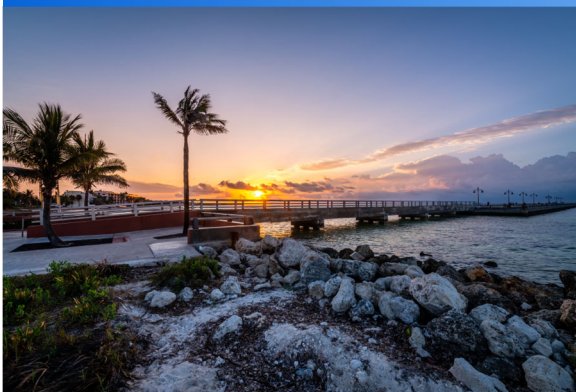
### Plantation Key Branch Office

The Jerry Ellis Building  
88800 Overseas Hwy  
Plantation Key, FL 33070  
(305) 852-7150

### Key Largo Branch Office

Tradewinds Shopping Center  
101487 Overseas Hwy  
Key Largo, FL 33037  
(305) 853-3562

[www.MonroeTaxCollector.com](http://www.MonroeTaxCollector.com)



## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION



## What Services Do We Offer?

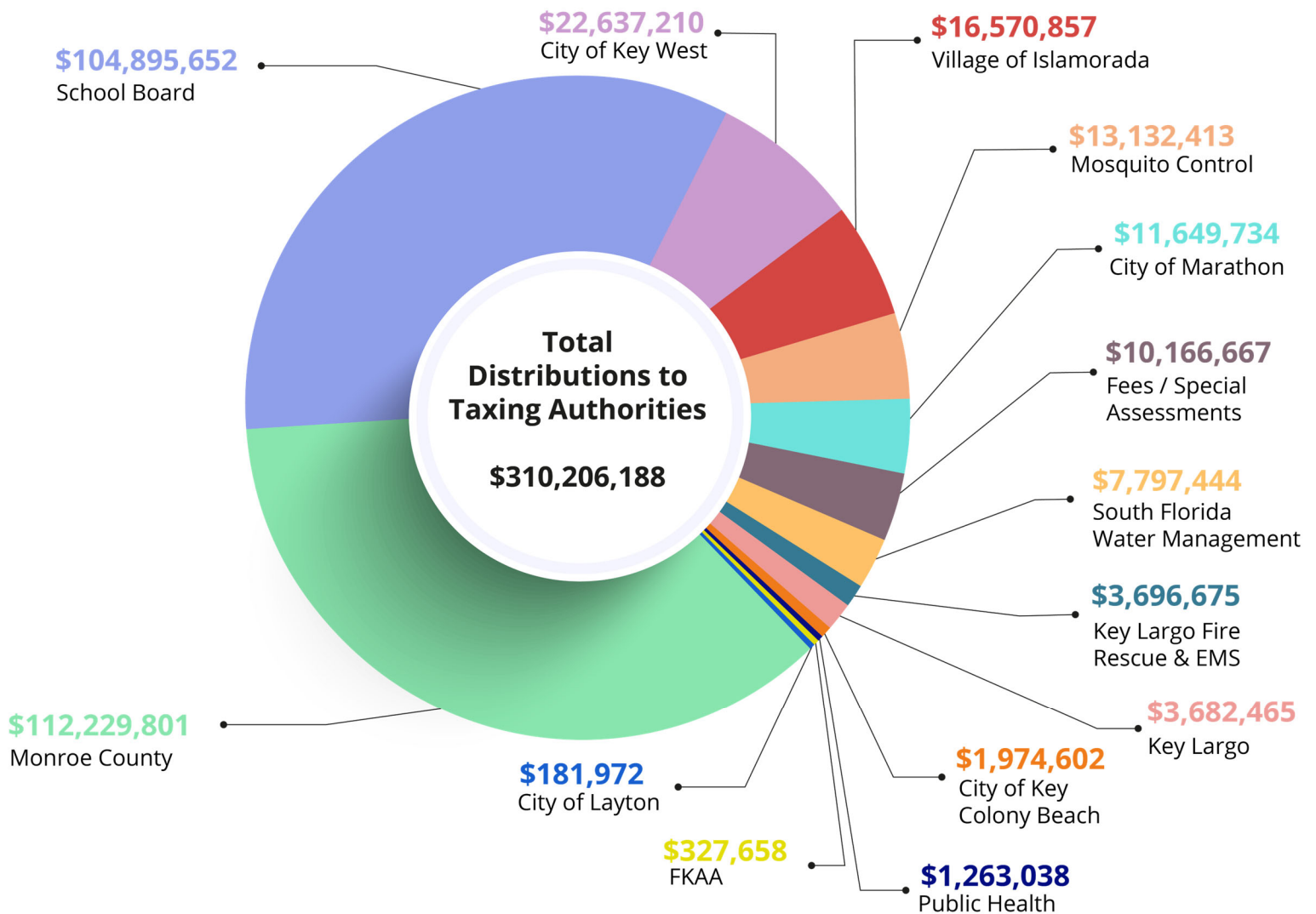
The Constitutional Tax Collector employs 60 highly-skilled people, who operate from Key West to Key Largo. The Tax Collector's Office operates six service centers within Monroe County, and the locations include the Key West Main Office, Key West Driver License Office, Big Pine Key Satellite Office, Marathon Branch Office, Plantation Key Branch Office, and Key Largo Branch Office.

The Constitutional Tax Collector serves as a limited and specialized agent for various state agencies, such as the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Department of Revenue, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Department of Health, and more.

The Tax Collector's Office provides a myriad of services, which includes but is not limited to:

- *Real Estate Property Tax*
- *Tangible Personal Property Tax*
- *Local Business Tax Receipts*
- *Tourist Development Tax*
- *U.S. Passports*
- *Vehicle and Vessel Registrations*
- *Driver License and Identification Cards*
- *Concealed Weapon Permits*
- *Hunting and Fishing Licenses*
- *Hurricane Re-Entry Decals*
- *Birth Certificates*

# Distributions to Taxing Authorities FY 2020-21



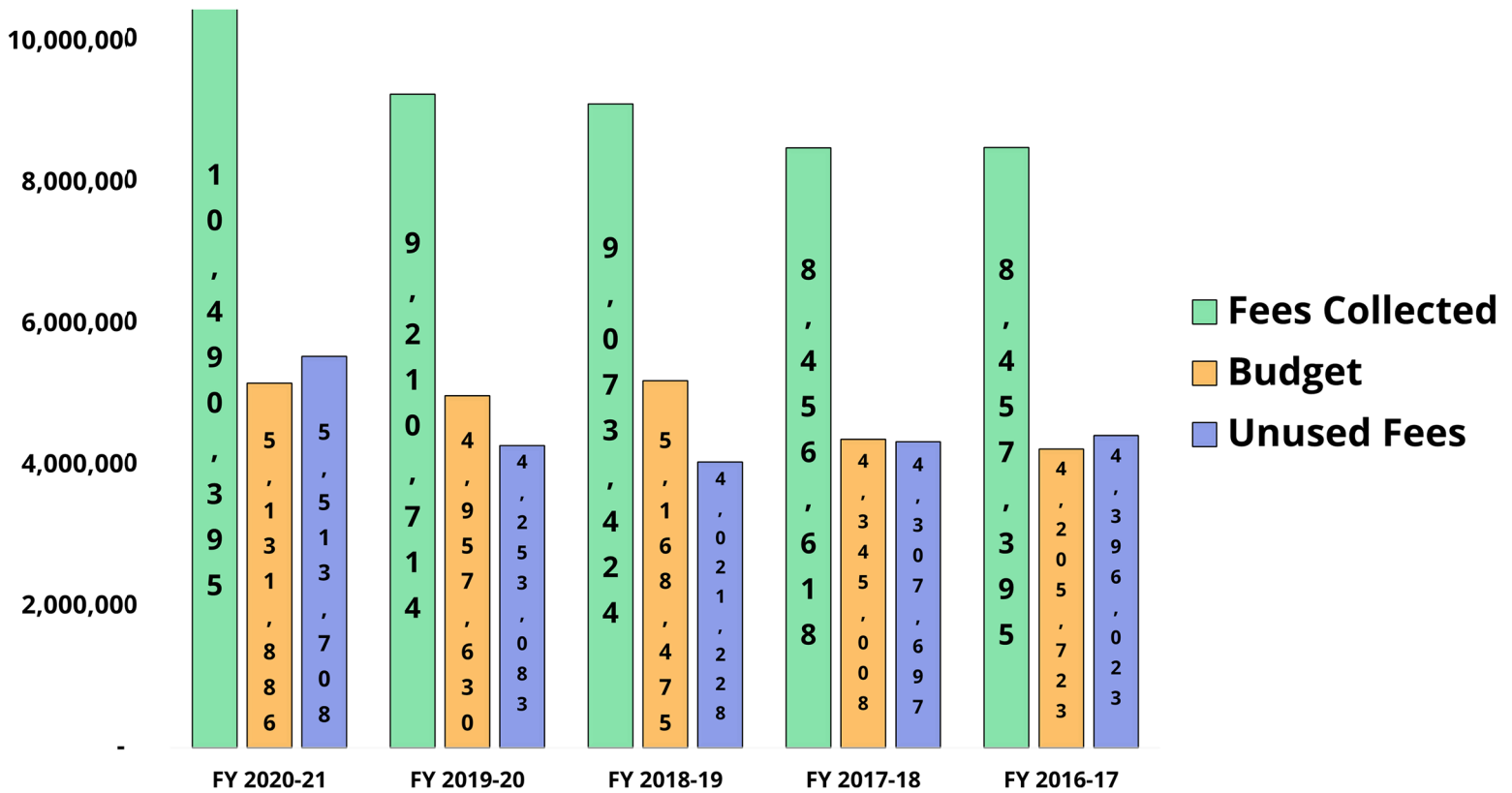
During the 2020 property tax cycle, the Constitutional Tax Collector's Office collected over \$310 million in property taxes and fees.

This revenue was then efficiently distributed to Monroe County's taxing authorities to fund essential public services.

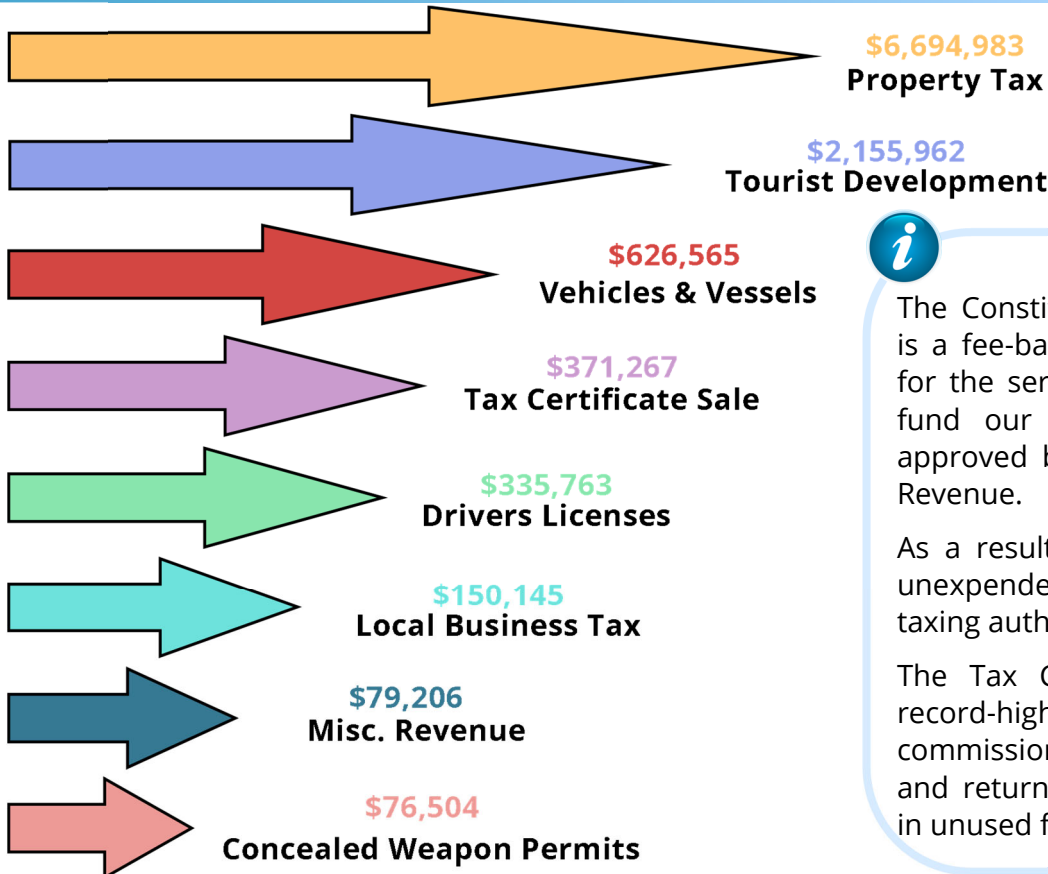
Revenue from property taxes pays for county and municipal services, hospitals, school district, law enforcement, fire and medical emergency services, mosquito control, and additional services that are critical to the operation of our county.



# Tax Collector's Budget



## Commissions and Fees



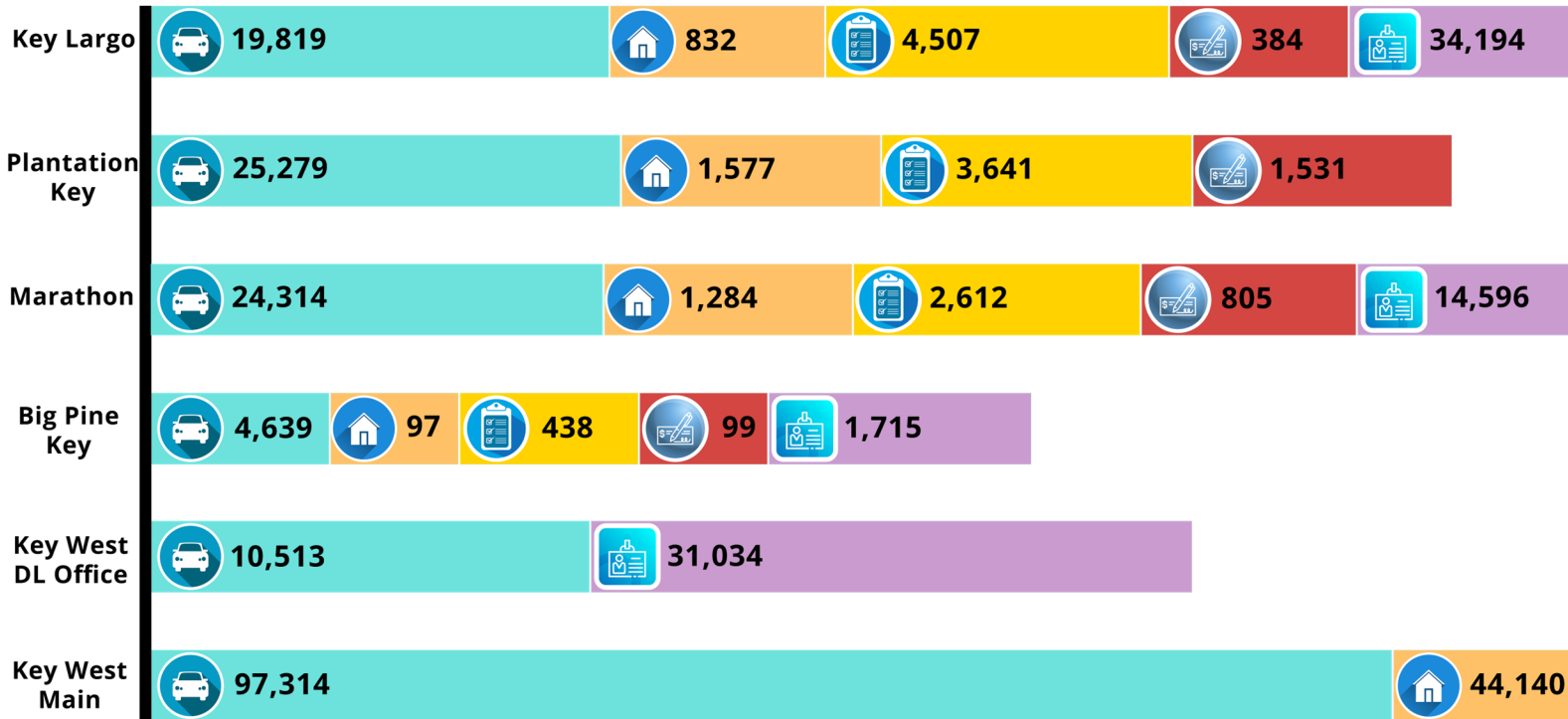
The Constitutional Tax Collector's Office is a fee-based office. The fees collected for the services we provide are used to fund our operating budget, which is approved by the Florida Department of Revenue.

As a result of cost-effective operations, unexpended revenue is returned to local taxing authorities in Monroe County.

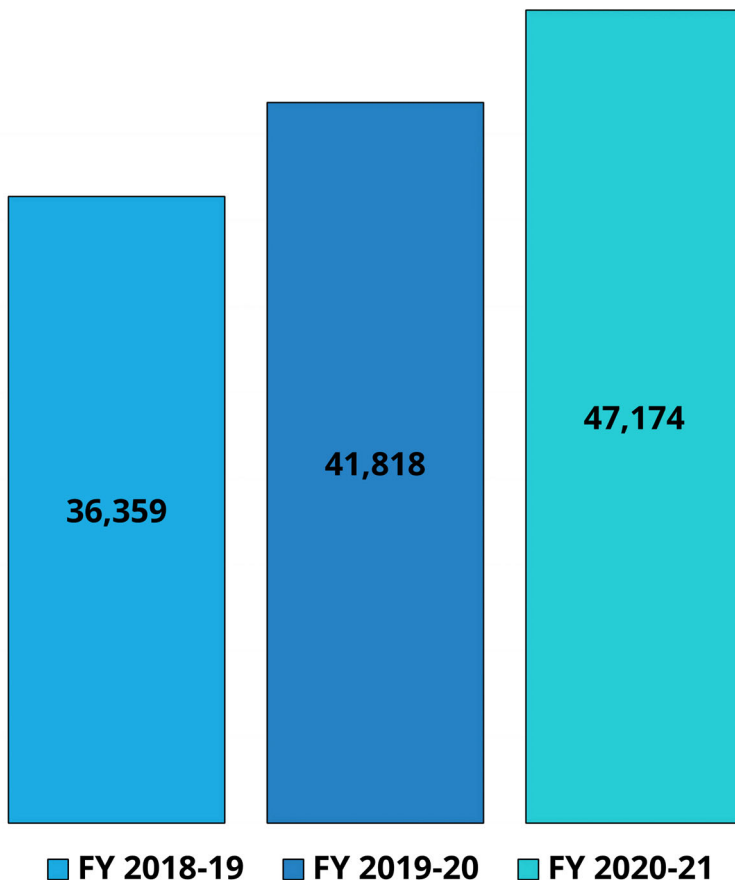
The Tax Collector's Office collected a record-high \$10.5 million in fees and commissions for Fiscal Year 2020-21, and returned a record-high \$5.5 million in unused fees to the taxing authorities.

# Serving You: Snapshot FY 2020-21 vs. FY 2019-20

## Total Transactions by Service Center



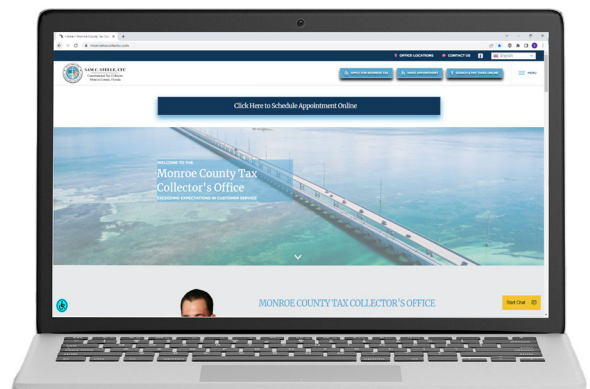
## Online Transactions



For your convenience, many of our transactions may be processed through our secure, online payment option directly through our website. There is no additional charge for using an E-Check.

Online transactions have increased by 30% from FY 2018-19 to FY 2020-21 and 13% from FY 2019-20 to FY 2020-21.

[www.MonroeTaxCollector.com](http://www.MonroeTaxCollector.com)







### Motor Vehicles

Total Transactions.....**183,492**



### Property Tax

Total Transactions.....**47,930**



### Miscellaneous Transactions

Total Transactions.....**42,852**



### Local Business Tax

Total Transactions.....**18,051**



### Driver Licenses/State ID Cards

Total Transactions.....**81,539**

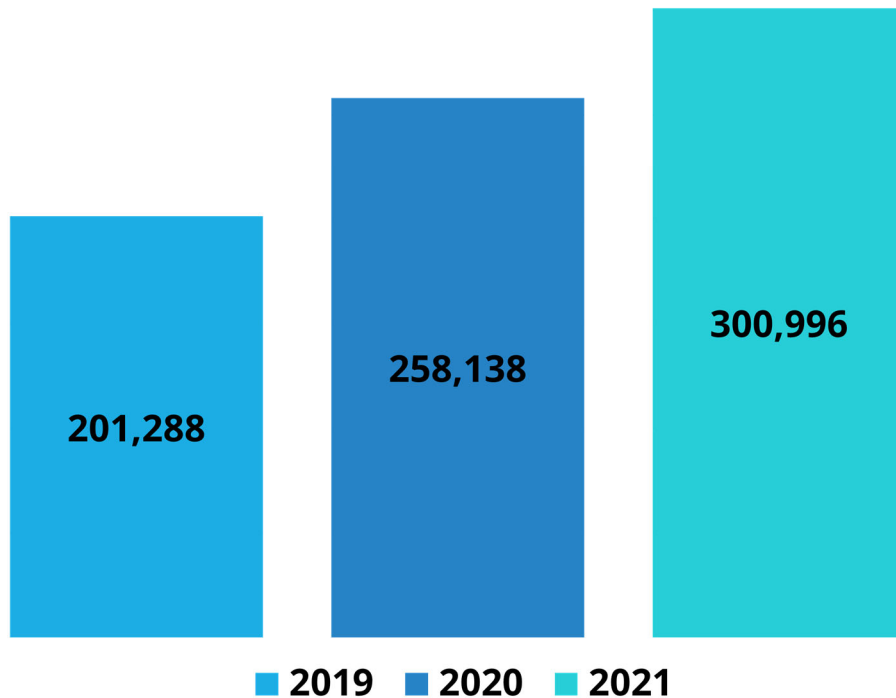


31,654



15,232

## Website Visits



■ 2019 ■ 2020 ■ 2021



The increase in the Monroe County Tax Collector's online presence has provided the customers with a convenient, electronic payment option that can be completed from any computer, smartphone, or tablet. This has resulted in decreased costs for office supplies, such as paper and printer ink, lower wait times in our lobbies, and a more efficient reconciliation and balancing process for our Finance Department.

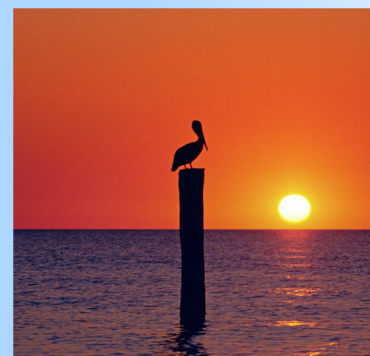
# Innovating and Modernizing Government

## 2021 Year in Review

The Honorable Sam C. Steele is the most recent Constitutional Tax Collector elected in Monroe County within the past 20 years. Under the leadership of Mr. Steele, the Monroe County Tax Collector's Office had a record-breaking year for Fiscal Year 2020-21, and our team achieved some very impressive accomplishments.

### Some of our team's accomplishments include:

- Highest collection and distribution of annual revenue on record at \$404,355,234.
- Highest collection of Tax Collector fees and commissions on record at \$10,490,395.
- Largest distribution on unused fees to the taxing authorities on record at \$5,513,707. These fees help support and fund critical public services for our community.
- Highest collection of tourist development tax (vacation rental enforcement) on record at \$69,247,252.
- Highest collection of revenue from motor vehicle/vessel and driver license services on record at \$18,274,658.
- First Tax Collector's Office in the State of Florida approved for virtual inspections for golf cart to low speed vehicle conversions. This eliminates the inconvenience for taxpayers to tow their golf carts as far north as Opa-Locka in Miami-Dade County for inspections.
- First government organization in Monroe County to use artificial intelligence in the form of a digital employee to answer customer questions. This new communication channel provides taxpayers another convenient method for conducting business with our office from the palm of their hands.
- Second Tax Collector's Office in the State of Florida to become a certified Passport Acceptance Agency by the U.S. Department of State and Homeland Security to provide passport services to the public.
- Added Apple Pay and PayPal as additional convenient payment options.
- Added HAZMAT endorsement fingerprinting services for commercial drivers at our Marathon Branch Office.
- Implemented high-speed payment processing equipment, which has resulted in faster bank deposits and increased interest earned on those deposits. This additional interest is distributed to the local taxing authorities and helps support our community.
- Implemented an electronic appointment scheduling system for the public.
- Created an electronic application process for business tax and tourist development tax.





# Artificial Intelligence

## Monroe Knows!

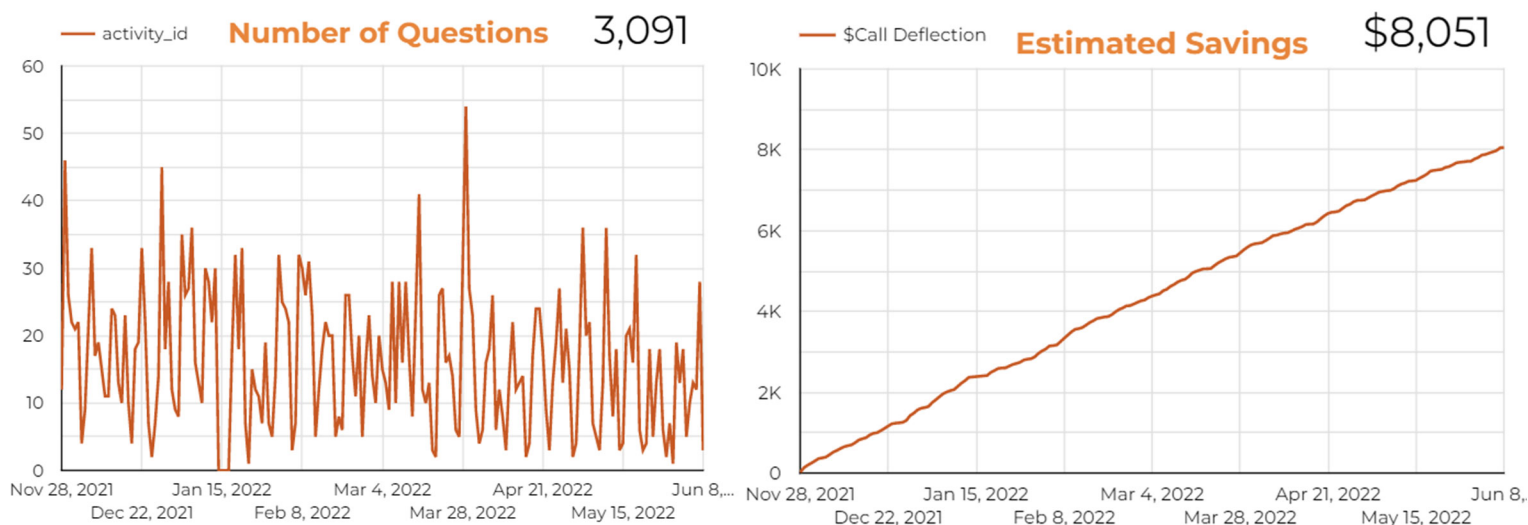
For your convenience, the Tax Collector's Office has "hired" a digital employee to answer customer questions on our website. This new communication channel provides taxpayers another convenient method for conducting business with our office from the palm of their hands.

Powered by the latest artificial intelligence technology, our new digital employee, Monroe, sorts through thousands of questions and answers to get you the information you need 24/7.



Since Monroe's implementation on November 28, 2021, she has answered over 3,000 customer questions. This has resulted in an estimated savings of \$8,051 in phone call deflection. State-wide, this technology has an estimated savings of over \$14 million.

Monroe has decreased the phone call volume in our office branches, and also allows customers to ask questions, obtain information, and process select transactions at their convenience. Monroe also provides less room for error on the employees' side, which eliminates unnecessary work for the Finance Department.



# Customer Feedback

## Help Us Improve and Leave a Review!

We pride ourselves on our customer service, and the best way for us to improve our services is by receiving feedback directly from you. We have created an online survey for the public to let us know how their experience interacting with our office was.

On the counters in each of our office locations, there are Customer Service Feedback cards that contain a QR code that will navigate you directly to the survey. The survey may also be accessed through the links on our website and Facebook page.

Whether you had an amazing or negative experience, or would just like to make a suggestion on how we can better serve you, we want to know!





# Contact Us

## Constitutional Tax Collector

Honorable Sam C. Steele, CFC  
PO Box 1129  
Key West, FL 33041-1129  
(305) 295-5000

## Chief Deputy Tax Collector

Angela Hitchcock  
(305) 295-5051

## Chief Financial Officer

Danny Cabot  
(305) 295-5046

## Chief Information Officer

Mike Kerns  
(305) 295-5072

## Director of Operations

Aileen Galvan  
(305) 295-5070

## Director of Motorist Services

Angelique LeCointe  
(305) 295-5080

## Director of Delinquent Collections

Mercedes Knowles  
(305) 295-5090

## Director of Tourist Development Tax

Jessica Gil  
(305) 295-5058

## Director of Audit and Enforcement

Pamela Sellers  
(305) 295-5062

## Director of Business Collections

Patti Atwell  
(305) 295-5063

## Branch Manager Key West Driver License

Debra Sawyer  
(305) 293-6338

## Branch Manager Big Pine Key

Mark Sweeting  
(305) 872-4751

## Branch Manager Marathon

Melissa Vargas  
(305) 289-6034

## Branch Manager Plantation Key

Ivette Chao  
(305) 852-7150

## Branch Manager Key Largo

Nancy Reyes  
(305) 853-3562



# SAM C. STEELE, CFC

Constitutional Tax Collector  
Monroe County, Florida



## OUR MISSION:

Exceeding expectations in customer service

## OUR VALUES:



ACCOUNTABILITY



COLLABORATION



FUN



FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY



COMMUNICATION



INTEGRITY

## CONTACT US

(305) 295-5000



@MonroeTaxCollector

(305) 295-5020



mail@monroetaxcollector.com

P.O. Box 1129  
Key West, FL 33041-1129



www.MonroeTaxCollector.com