

News Release

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Comptroller's Office delivers on promise to process 98 percent of stimulus payments in four days with \$175 million disbursed

*New web portal visited by 450,000 taxpayers; agency
employees fielded thousands of calls, emails and social
media messages*

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (February 19, 2021) - Keeping his pledge to quickly get stimulus funds into the hands of more than 422,000 eligible Marylanders, Comptroller Peter Franchot today announced that 98 percent of payments have been processed within four days of the RELIEF Act becoming law on Monday, February 15.

Specifically, 266,985 electronic payments with a value of \$113.6 million have been transmitted to banks for deposit into individuals' accounts, and 148,972 paper checks, totaling \$61.7 million, have also been processed.

At the same time, the agency has fulfilled its primary function of processing nearly 160,000 tax returns and issuing \$17 million in refunds since the tax season officially started on Feb. 12. More than 3.2 million individual returns are processed annually.

“This has been a Herculean effort by our staff who diligently prepared for weeks to get almost all RELIEF Act funds quickly distributed to Marylanders who need it most, despite this week’s weather,” said Comptroller Franchot. “Equally important, we haven’t missed a beat accepting state tax returns and getting refunds out the door in a matter of days. I’m so proud of the 1,100 employees of the Comptroller’s Office who have proven that your government can rise to the occasion and deliver

in a way that Marylanders deserve and should expect.”

During the past four days, 450,000 taxpayers have visited the Comptroller’s RELIEF Act web portal and staff has responded to 700 social media inquiries. Taxpayer Services staff have fielded 14,000 phone calls on a dedicated hotline with an average wait time of 57 seconds and have responded to 4,400 email inquiries. Each day, up to 180 employees have been assigned to answer calls on the toll-free number set up specifically for RELIEF Act questions.

On Tuesday, Comptroller Franchot joined with agency leadership through a virtual press conference to explain how his office would implement key RELIEF Act provisions and take questions from the media about the preparation and implementation of the stimulus package. The public accessed the press conference live on the agency’s Facebook page and YouTube channel.

“It was so wonderful to see all of your departments educating us on how the Relief Act ... will impact the communities at-large,” Silver Spring resident Donna Morris wrote in an email to the Comptroller thanking the agency for its public outreach and government effectiveness. “The additional staff and phone numbers for residents to navigate through all these hard times is much appreciated.”

Under the RELIEF Act, 422,531 recipients are eligible for one-time stimulus payments of \$300 or \$500. Taxpayers who claimed the Earned Income Tax Credit in Tax Year 2019 and reside in or have permanent residence in Maryland as of February 12 are eligible for payments.

Electronic payments have been made via bank account information on file from the recipient’s 2019 Maryland State Income Tax Return. Those receiving mailed paper checks either did not elect the direct deposit option when filing their 2019 taxes, or the direct deposit information used at that time is no longer accurate, or their address has not been verified by the U.S. Postal Service.

Taxpayers can go to www.marylandtaxes.gov/RELIEFAct to see if they qualify, check the status of their payments and learn more about the RELIEF Act. They can also call **1-833-345-0787** or email ReliefAct@marylandtaxes.gov to communicate with an agency representative during business hours.

WEEK ONE IMPLEMENTATION

98% of stimulus payments processed

 **266,000+** electronic payments

 **148,000+** checks mailed

 **\$175 million** in payments disbursed

 **14,000** phone calls received

 **57** seconds average wait time

 **450,000** visits to RELIEF Act stimulus portal

 **4,400** emails received

 **700** social media inquiries received

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