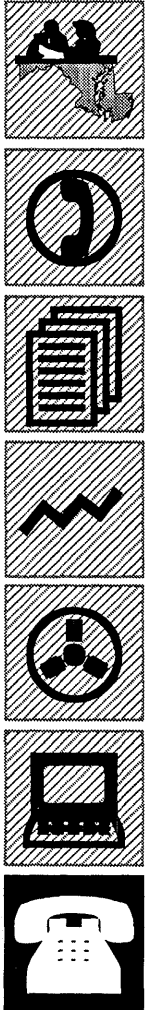


Taxpayer service technology



Among the many customers taxpayer service representatives like Patti Dustin recently assisted included a caller from the Canada who was thrilled to get a fast and accurate update of his Maryland tax return several hundred miles away - without toll charges.

Comptroller Goldstein's use of technology has also improved the service available to taxpayers.

With 75% of Maryland's 2.2 million taxpayers expecting refund checks every year, it's no surprise that the 24-hour refund hotline logged over 520,000 calls during fiscal year 1996.

Prompted by the taxpayer's Social Security number and other data, the automated refund system tells taxpayers the location of their check in the processing pipeline.

The comptroller's taxpayer service lines also received more than 327,000 calls during the fiscal year - two-thirds of which come in during the January - April tax filing season.

Taxpayer service representatives answer a sea of calls and can make changes to an account while talking to the taxpayer on the phone or even print a copy of the form to provide to the customer.

Taxpayers can also e-mail inquiries to the State Comptroller's Office at taxhelp@comp.state.md.us.

Free for the calling

Maryland income tax help

1-800-MD TAXES

24-hour refund hotline

1-800-218-8160

Maryland business tax help

1-800-492-1751

Unclaimed funds

1-800-782-7383

Maryland Relay Service

(MRS): 1-800-735-2258