



1980s

In 1980, the comptroller opened the Central Registration Unit, offering a convenient one-stop service for businesses opening tax accounts in Maryland.

The 1980s proved to be a robust decade for both Maryland's diversified economy and the State Comptroller's Office, where several changes dramatically altered the sales and income tax operations.

Formal income tax fraud awareness training began in 1981, helping employees to prevent millions of tax dollars from going into the wrong hands.

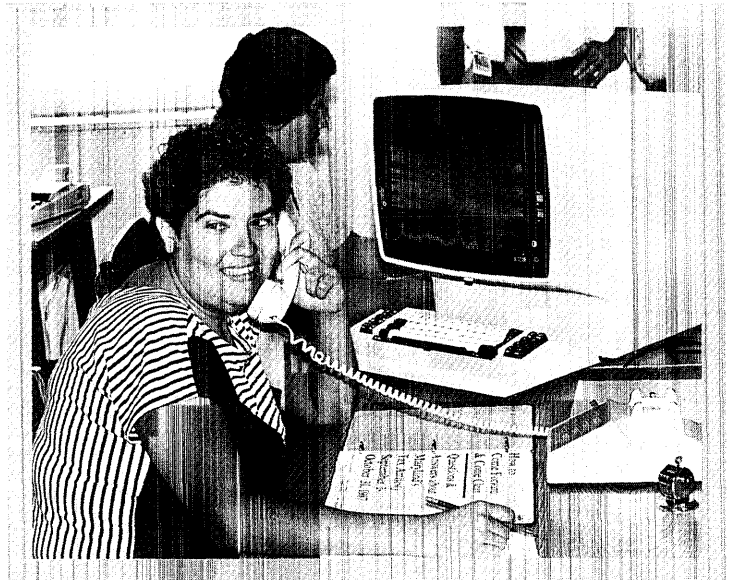
In the sales tax division, auditors began a consolidated audit approach to their nearly 100,000 accounts, using a new centralized address file.

By 1986, tax collectors were using a new computer-assisted collection system.

Within another year, Maryland became the first state in the nation to use computerized statistical sampling techniques to perform sales tax audits.

Federal income tax reform introduced in 1986 eliminated many deductions while broadening the tax base - creating dramatic changes on the state revenue side.

Maryland's tax amnesty in 1987 generated \$34.6 million in delinquent taxes - mostly personal and corporate income taxes - while



Theresa Russ (left) and Joyce Jones of the Comptroller's Office helped some of the 25,143 callers who responded to Maryland's tax amnesty campaign in 1987 to "come forward and come clean," adding more than \$34 million to state and local government coffers. Photo by Michael Walsh

adding hundreds of new taxpayers to state tax rolls.

Beginning in 1988, the legislature made several changes affecting state income tax forms, including a checkoff feature for donating to Chesapeake Bay-related projects, an increased standard deduction, higher personal exemption amounts and new benefits for disabled and military taxpayers.

For the first time, Comptroller Goldstein included a list of taxpayers' rights in Maryland's state tax booklet.

By decade's end, hundreds of business taxpayers were using an expanded, automated 24-hour phone service in the Sales and Use Tax Division for faster response to tax inquiries and forms requests.

80% of Maryland's 4.2 million citizens lived in the Baltimore-Washington, D.C. corridor by 1980.