

# News Release

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## Tax Preparers are Deemed "Essential Service" Under Executive Order

*Agency will remain vigilant in identifying fraudulent preparers*

**ANNAPOLIS, Md. (March 25, 2020)** - Comptroller Peter Franchot today clarifies that tax preparation services are considered an “essential service” and may remain open for business during the State of Maryland’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Below is a statement from Comptroller Franchot:

“Tax preparation services fall under ‘financial services’ as outlined in the list of exempt businesses in Governor Hogan’s March 23rd executive order, and therefore should remain open as a critical infrastructure sector.

“Our agency regards tax preparers as a vital financial service that is available to taxpayers. Earlier this month, I announced extensions to deadlines for individual and corporate income tax filings and payments to July 15 and for business-related tax payments to June 1. However, taxpayers and businesses will still rely on professional tax preparers to help manage their finances during these challenging economic times. Preparers also help individuals who have yet to file their returns, but are counting on tax refunds to survive the economic downturn.

“Even with delayed due dates, continued assistance from these services to both individual and business taxpayers will help ensure that the tax filing and payment processes remain timely and accurate. If they had to shut down now, once the pandemic is under control and our economy begins to rebuild, the state would experience a delay in revenues and taxpayers would experience a similar lag in the receipt of their refunds - both of which would be highly undesirable outcomes.

“Even worse, in the absence of the skilled and reputable preparers who are duly regulated by the State of Maryland, taxpayers would be more susceptible to fraudulent preparers and end up bearing financial and legal responsibility for the illegal actions of tax cheats.

“Our fraud detection teams will be more vigilant than ever, during this time of unprecedented economic volatility, in protecting Maryland taxpayers from sleazy preparers who seek to profit from the vulnerability of others.”

Taxpayers with any questions about the status of a tax preparer, or to report possible illegal or unethical conduct, should email the Comptroller’s Office at [taxhelp@marylandtaxes.gov](mailto:taxhelp@marylandtaxes.gov). An updated list of blocked tax preparers is available at [www.marylandtaxes.gov](http://www.marylandtaxes.gov) under the “Security” tab.

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