



Statewide Customer Service Annual Report FY 21

“Marylanders expect the best possible customer service from their state government, and that is exactly what they deserve.”

Governor, Larry Hogan
Lt. Governor, Boyd K. Rutherford



CHANGING
Maryland
FOR THE BETTER



LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Dear Marylanders,

When our administration first established the Governor's Customer Service Initiative in 2016, we were determined to establish a strong service culture in state agencies, improve customer service training for state employees, and create new service performance metrics to track improvements in our customer service over time.

I am proud to present highlights of that progress here in the Fiscal Year 2021 Statewide Customer Service Annual Report. The tireless work of our employees and their passion for public service have allowed us to bring our Customer Service Initiative to new heights. While there is always room for improvement, all of our state agencies have reaffirmed their commitment to delivering on our Customer Service Promise.

I encourage you to take a look at maryland.gov/customerservice for more information, browse past reports, and view examples of recognitions that state employees have received for being champions of customer service for all Marylanders.

On behalf of the State of Maryland, thank you to all of our survey respondents and dedicated state employees as together we are all working to change Maryland for the better.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Larry Hogan".

Larry Hogan
Governor

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Customer Service Feedback from Marylanders

The Governor’s Customer Feedback Survey provides Marylanders with an opportunity to give feedback about their interactions with the state government. In Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21), July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021, the state received 36,572 survey responses with 61% respondents indicating they were satisfied with the overall customer service experience.

Since the beginning of the initiative in 2017, 64% of the total respondents were very satisfied. The Hogan-Rutherford administration has received an overall customer satisfaction rating of 71%. We are pleased to share some of the highlights from FY21 efforts to improve the customer service experience.

The State collects feedback from multiple sources including data from survey links in Maryland employee email signature blocks and in various places on agency websites with the “Give the Governor Your Feedback” logo; after customers complete an online transaction; Maryland Business Express, where survey links allow businesses to provide feedback; and after various events to improve the customer experience. In addition, the Department of Transportation utilizes a third-party, independent contractor to collect survey feedback throughout the year; this survey shows a similar customer satisfaction rating, helping to confirm the quality of data.





Feedback Loop - Take Action & Follow Up

Information provided by Marylanders through the survey is used to improve products and services, and to take action so that state agencies can follow up with customers.

SDAT encourages customers to submit feedback through the online survey, but we also encourage them to fill out customer service cards in person. These cards have been updated to align with the Hogan-Rutherford administration’s Customer Service Promise and online survey. The cards, pictured below, are available in each of our 24 local offices and at the two customer service counters at our headquarters location in Baltimore.

Overall, how satisfied are you with the customer service provided?

Very Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Neutral Somewhat Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

The Department of Assessments and Taxation made it easy for me to handle my issue.

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

If you would like someone to follow up regarding your comments, please fill out the following contact information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Office Visited: _____

Purpose of visit: _____

Comments: _____

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MD
DEPARTMENT OF ASSESSMENTS AND TAXATION

MARYLAND

Mail to Headquarters at:
301 W. Preston St.
Baltimore, MD 21201-2395

THE CUSTOMER SERVICE PROMISE
Our Department pledges to provide customers with services in the following manner:

- Friendly and Courteous:** We will be helpful and supportive and have a positive attitude and passion for what we do.
- Timely and Responsive:** We will be proactive, take initiative, and anticipate your needs.
- Accurate and Consistent:** We will always aim for 100% accuracy, and be consistent in how we interpret and implement state policies and procedures.
- Accessible and Convenient:** We will continue to simplify and improve access to information and resources.
- Truthful and Transparent:** We will embrace a culture of honesty, clarity and trust.

Completing this survey will help us enhance the information & services we provide. **Thank You** Your feedback is important to us. Please answer the following questions...

The survey also provides users with a field to voluntarily input Contact Info, Reason for Contact, and Comments; approximately half of all survey respondents complete these fields. Each agency reviews survey responses, either daily or weekly, in order to identify places for change, implement action steps, and to follow up with customers.

Utilizing Technology for a better customer service experience

Department of Assessments and Taxation

- In April 2020, the department released 15 new online services that make it significantly easier for businesses to obtain and remain in Good Standing status, a requirement necessary for many types of COVID-related relief.
- The Real Property team exemplified leadership in the department by implementing a video appeal hearing process using Google Meet for the 2021 appeal year as an option for taxpayers to safely have their appeal hearings and also managed to finalize almost 25,000 appeals using written and telephone appeal hearings because all in person hearings were suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Department of Housing and Community Development

- Enhanced the agency's usage of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to provide current and important information to facilitate better communication with customers.
- DHCH enhanced the agency's usage of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to provide current and important information to facilitate better communication with customers. The response time goal for all customer inquiries received via the phone line, customer service inbox, and social media is within one business day. The average response time to messages received via Facebook is under seven hours, and we respond to 100% of messages.

Maryland Department of Education

- The Division of Early Childhood Held weekly, then monthly, listening sessions during the pandemic to respond to child care providers' health and safety concerns. When the MSDE released child care pandemic relief grants and child care stabilization grants, the Division held technical assistance sessions, created a dedicated website, and responded to thousands of questions submitted to a 24-hour on-line portal. Over 10,000 grants were awarded to child care providers to help mitigate the effects of the pandemic and to build back Maryland's child care system.

Department of Assessment and Taxation

- In April 2020, the department released 15 new online services that make it significantly easier for businesses to obtain and remain in Good Standing status, a requirement necessary for many types of COVID-related relief. A real-time processing feature was also launched on June 30, giving customers the ability to see when their document(s) will be reviewed by the department before and after they are submitted. In the coming months, the department is also planning on releasing same-day review and non-expedited filing options online.
- When comparing FY20 with FY21, the Charter Services division saw a 39% increase in total filings and a 54% increase in expedited filings--more filings asked to be processed faster. There were also 114,959 new businesses registered, 57% more than in FY20.
- From March 2020 to the end of July 2021, SDAT prioritized businesses seeking Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loans and successfully brought over 3,409 businesses back into Good Standing.
- The department experienced a huge increase in the number of requests for documents this year. As a result of the increased workload and the COVID-19 pandemic, the team became equipped with home scanners. This allowed for documents to be pulled at work and scanned at home increasing productivity. In FY21, the department increased production of the in-house scanning operation to over 400,000 documents (over 1.2 million pages). The in-house scanning operation works in tandem with Wells Fargo, which SDAT contracted with in FY18 to augment internal scanning operations and improve efficiency and processing abilities.
- The Homeowners' and Renters' Tax Credit Application deadline was automatically extended for all applicants from October 1 to October 31 in 2020.
- A video appeal hearing process using Google Meet was created for the 2021 appeal year as an option for taxpayers to safely have their appeal hearings.

As mentioned above, in FY21 the Real Property team exemplified leadership in the department by implementing a video appeal hearing process using Google Meet for the 2021 appeal year as an option for taxpayers to safely have their appeal hearings and also managed to finalize almost 25,000 appeals using written and telephone appeal hearings because all in person hearings were suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Despite pandemic logistical constraints, in 2020 the Tax Credit Division processed over 65,000 Homeowners' Tax Credit, over 11,000 Renters' Tax Credit applications, and nearly 50,000 Homestead Tax CreOn the business filings side, **Maryland Business**

Express (MBE) continues to improve the quality of service provided to our Charter customers, while decreasing processing times. The multiple new online services offered in FY20 and FY21 have made it even more convenient to conduct business in the State, and the site continues to receive an astounding **95% customer satisfaction rating.** The filing of charter documents online through Maryland Business Express continues to be the most widely used portion of MBE thus far, and today more than 90% of all Maryland Charter transactions occur online.

The increased availability of online services continues to reduce processing times while also enabling us to better allocate other resources. Four years ago, it would take up to 10 weeks for document copy requests and non-expedited hard copy filings to be processed and returned; today the turnaround is down 6 to 8 weeks for non-expedited filings. Expedited mailed filings are processed within 10 business days. These timelines were maintained with few exceptions during the entirety of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Department of Housing and Community Development

Office of Public Information - Customer Service

- DHCH enhanced the agency's usage of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to provide current and important information to facilitate better communication with customers. The response time goal for all customer inquiries received via the phone line, customer service inbox, and social media is within one business day. The average response time to messages received via Facebook is under seven hours, and we respond to 100% of messages.
- Additionally, in the Office of Public Information (OPI), all employees have been cross-trained and given access to the customer service phone line to assist during high-volume call times and when the customer service manager is unavailable. Multiple OPI employees also have access to the customer service email inbox. This ensures a more timely response for those who have reached out with an inquiry or concern. Additionally, staff members in other divisions have been trained on the use of the customer service line to serve as backup when OPI staff are unavailable

Neighborhood Revitalization

COVID-19 Pandemic Response

During FY21, the division's primary focus was awarding and administering the nearly \$242 million of state and federal COVID-19 funding it received for local governments, nonprofits, businesses, Main Streets, and the tourism industry. To get these resources out as quickly as possible, the division:

- Educated staff on the parameters of all of the new COVID-19 programs so that they could provide customers with information about the available resources
- Ensured that staff were equipped with the necessary equipment to telework and able to provide our customers with uninterrupted, top-notch service
- Coordinated response efforts with fellow state agencies, including the Maryland Department of Health Behavioral Health Administration, Maryland Department of Human Service, Maryland Department of Emergency Management, Maryland Department of Commerce, and Maryland Department of Labor
- Allowed grantees that still had money left in their programs to repurpose those funds to address the pandemic; some repurposed funds went directly to small businesses located on Maryland's historic Main Streets
- Conducted most of our grantee training sessions as well as hiring interviews virtually, saving our customers time and the expense of commuting

Office of Community Engagement

By leveraging key stakeholders, they support the Office of the Governor and the Secretary by communicating with the citizens of Maryland and key partners about critical initiatives statewide. We have developed collaborative opportunities and built partnerships with academia, non-profits, businesses, and government entities; broadening the reach and awareness of the Department's products to deliver more services. This office connects at a grassroots level with many diverse communities that we serve. All Event and Sponsorship forms are available online.

Outreach Strategies/Grassroots Engagement:

- Canvassing
- Hispanic and & African American media advertisement
- Presentations at events (Open to the public)
- Virtual events
- Town Hall/forums
- Local community partners events
- Elected officials
- Non-profits
- Faith-based organizations
- Housing counselors and MarylandMD network of attorneys
- State and /local government agencies

The Department is committed to serving all Maryland residents and has focused efforts on equity and making sure their message is reaching a diverse audience.

African American Market:

Radio One, Inc. is the largest distributor of urban content in the country. For more than 40 years, Urban One has been the leading voice speaking to Black America. First, as the largest local urban radio network. Then, as the largest syndicator of urban programming. No other multi-media company reaches over 80% of Black America. Radio One, Inc. was engaged by DHCD to partner and ensure ERAP is accessible to African American communities in Maryland through marketing, communications, and outreach support.

African American Market Results:

Radio advertising

- **110** - :30 second commercials on Magic 92QFM
- **50** - :30 second commercials on Praise 106.1FM
- **50** - :30 second commercials on Majic 95.9FM
- **Live Radio** - Interview on Larry Young show, WOLB, 1010

AM Social media platforms

- **10,000** - weekly streaming impressions on 92QFM
- **10,000** - weekly streaming impressions on Praise 106.1FM
- **10,000** - weekly streaming impressions on Magic 95.9FM

Hispanic/Latino Market:

Cool & Associates, LLC is a full-service management consulting firm that brings

Hispanic strategy, workforce development, education, marketing, and outreach to the forefront of any organization.

This organization was engaged by DHCD to ensure ERAP is accessible to the Hispanic community in Maryland, through marketing, communications, and outreach support.

Hispanic Market Results:

- Virtual Events - Hosted 12 online workshops with Latino community partners with 50-100 participants per event
- Hispanic Content - Translated program materials, press releases, website and social-media content
- Digital Outreach - Provided social media interactions and tracked results
- Influencer Engagement - Identified key media personalities and community partners to amplify outreach efforts
- Community Engagement - Engaged Latino community through online communities such as Facebook groups, churches, and other Hispanic organizations
- Media/Public Relations - Leveraged various Spanish media outlets to amplify the reach to educate the Hispanic/Latino community
- Live Interviews - Conducted three on El Zol stations, La Nueva 87.7FM and Radio America stations
- Virtual Interview - Conducted two on Radio America and County Cable Montgomery local news and public affairs cable station. These were recorded to re-air again.
- Radio Ad Promotions - On various media platforms

Maryland State Department of Education



- In FY 2021, the MSDE saw a significant number of Customer Service Surveys completed. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, MSDE customers completed an average of 1,600 surveys each year. In FY 2021, more than 2,800 surveys were completed, almost twice the amount compared to prior years.
- In FY 2021, 83.9% of Customer Service Survey respondents indicated they were satisfied with the customer service received, well exceeding the 81.5% goal for the year.
- At the beginning of the pandemic, only 29% of Maryland's 7,236 licensed child care programs were operating. Today, 96% are operating thanks to the support of the 13 regional licensing offices and the licensing staff.
- Immediately recognizing that school closures would significantly impact children who depend upon free and reduced-price school meals, MSDE collaborated with local school systems and other State agencies to provide safe, emergency grab-and-go meals to children. From the beginning of the pandemic through FY 2021, approximately 115 million school meals were served through all programs.
- To help address issues of food insecurity, the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS), in conjunction with the MSDE, has secured approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture on its joint submission to operate a Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) Program (see USDA P-EBT Approval Letter and Maryland PEBT State Plan_SY2020-2021). These benefits provide assistance to families in Maryland in purchasing food while schools are closed due to COVID-19.
- Maryland Disability Determination Services (DDS) continued to participate in the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) population and outreach initiative. This included regular outreach with community partners and quarterly participation on SOAR State Planning Calls.
- The SOAR program increases access to Social Security disability benefits for eligible children and adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or co-occurring substance use disorder. Maryland DDS adjudicated 193 SOAR claims during

State Fiscal Year 21. These claims provide a federal revenue stream to Maryland resulting in direct and indirect cost savings.

- SSA is working with community partners to increase the applications for the Supplemental Security Income population that have faced barriers to applying during the COVID pandemic. DDS Medical Relations Director (MRD) assisted with this initiative.
- The MRD participated in outreach efforts with SSA to increase the applications for this population, including conducting outreach to school professionals to promote the disability program, and to the medical community, to encourage the electronic submission of disability evidence and improve the virtual processing of disability claims.

Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries

The timeliness of responding to customer inquiries varies depending on the type and complexity of the request.

- Office of Child Care - Child Care Scholarship Branch, a third-party vendor contract requires that a caller does not wait more than five minutes once they are transferred from the IVR. This requirement is consistently met. In June 2021, the average speed of answer was 18 seconds.
- The Division of Early Childhood Held weekly, then monthly, listening sessions during the pandemic to respond to child care providers' health and safety concerns. When the MSDE released child care pandemic relief grants and child care stabilization grants, the Division held technical assistance sessions, created a dedicated website, and responded to thousands of questions submitted to a 24-hour on-line portal. Over 10,000 grants were awarded to child care providers to help mitigate the effects of the pandemic and to build back Maryland's child care system.

Department of Health and Human Services

- As the safety net for Maryland Citizens, the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) continued to serve its Maryland residents with no interruptions during the Pandemic all throughout FY21, expanding as needed to accommodate the increased needs of our citizens.
- The agency rapidly coordinated with the Maryland State Department of Education to provide Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) funds under

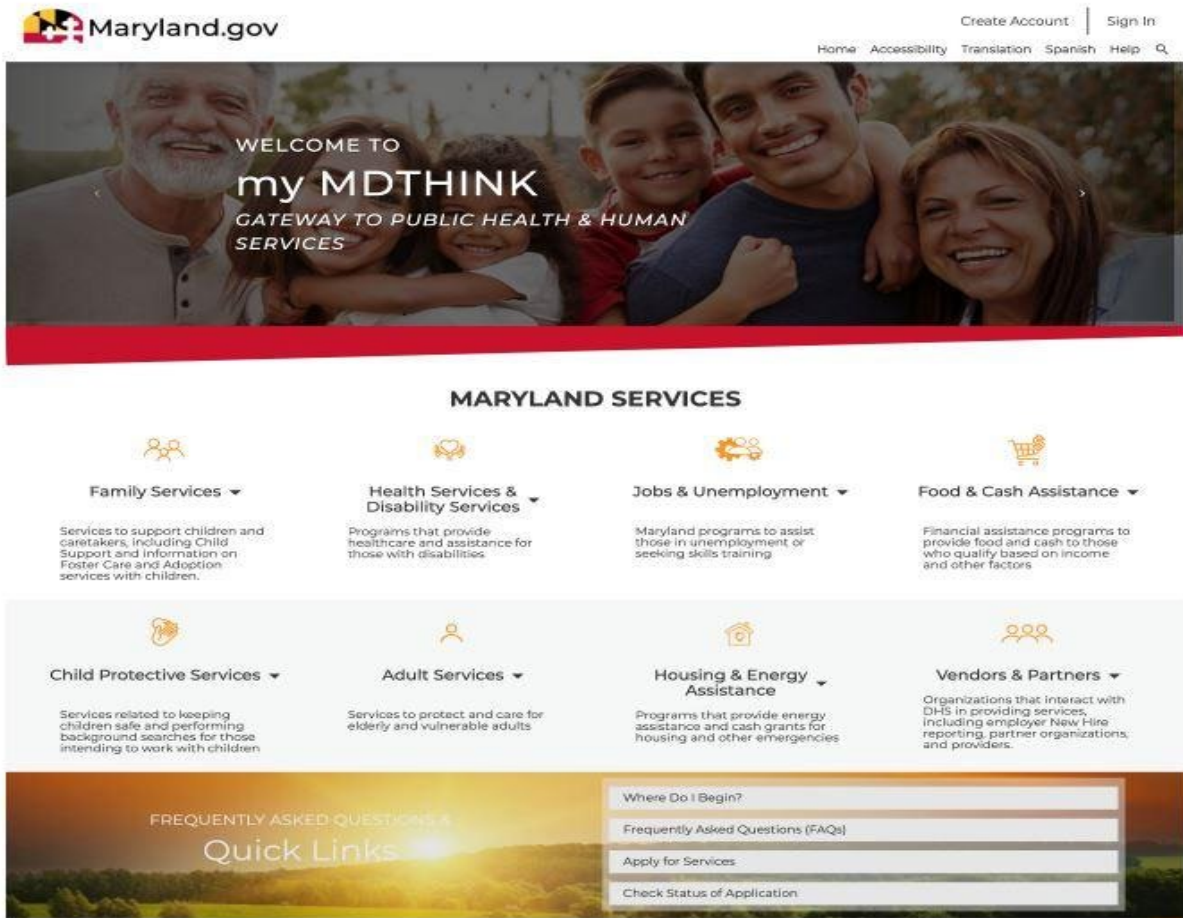
the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. In December 2020 the P-EBT funding was expanded to include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) children, under the age of 6. With this emergency funding, DHS was able to provide good nutrition and stability for children across the state. We provided P-EBT benefits to 550,000 children on average per month, with a total of \$690 million in P-EBT benefits distributed since the program began.

- With the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic putting extra stress on our elderly, home care clients and homeless customers, DHS case workers and staff rose to the occasion. Our Local DSS offices have reported many incidents of DHS staff going above and beyond the call of duty; visiting vulnerable adults, helping guide the homeless, even helping families make funeral arrangements.
- Data Analysis - The DHS Facebook account has global visibility with followers spreading to 45 countries, 44 cities, and 45 languages. In FY 21, the account had a total of 10,982 followers, accumulating 2,105 followers which reflects a 23.7% increase in comparison to FY 20. On Facebook, DHS frequently fields inquiries from customers, primarily through direct messaging, assisting customers in finding the appropriate solution or resource for their concerns. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these inquiries on social media and overall engagement spiked drastically. Since October 2020, adding additional support has allowed the department to swiftly reply to all direct messages, upholding a 100% response rate and connecting with customers over 1,200 times. As post engagements continued to increase pushing the platform to 10,540-page likes during the time of reporting, DHS continued to improve by interacting on the Facebook page daily.
- The DHS Twitter account also has global visibility with active followers expanding across the states of Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia, and more. In FY 21, the account had a total of 5,402 followers, accumulating 950 followers which reflects a 21.3% audience increase in comparison to FY 20. Like Facebook, DHS fields inquiries from customers, primarily through direct messaging, assisting customers in finding the appropriate solution or resource for their concerns. During the time of reporting, the department replied to all direct messages, upholding a 100% response rate and connecting with customers over 70 times.

Making Agency Services Available Online

To meet the emergent need of our customers due to the pandemic, the Agency was able to provide new and updated information about the pandemic and available relief online quickly. This was done seamlessly as the MD Think Team continued to develop major upgrades for the DHS program processes on a cloud platform. MD THINK is currently finalizing the Design, Development, and Implementation (DDI) phase. Several exciting milestones are planned for the next two (2) years. The Adult Services and Juvenile Services (CJAMS), and Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) applications are

planned to be in Statewide deployment by the end of FFY 2021. The Child Support Management System (CSMS) is planned for Statewide deployment in FFY 2022.



Maryland Insurance Administration

The primary role of the Maryland Insurance Administration is to protect consumers from illegal insurance practices by ensuring insurance companies and producers that operate in Maryland act in accordance with state insurance laws. As such, the administration assisted nearly 9,000 consumers with their formal complaints in FY2021.

Ask MIA Marketing Campaign: The administration launched a new marketing campaign in FY21 targeting nontraditional audiences for insurance-related information. We created a cartoon character known as "Mia" that we use to promote events, virtual webinars and our virtual open houses.



askMIA
Maryland Insurance Administration

Join the **Maryland Insurance Administration** during your lunch break for a Virtual Open House. Learn more about how we can help you and discuss your insurance issues one-on-one with an MIA representative. Stop by and chat with us, we're here to help!



Date: May 18, 2021
Time: 11am-12:30pm
Zoom Link: ow.ly/gD9y50Eufas
Registration: ow.ly/SfxA50EulaH



Maryland
INSURANCE ADMINISTRATION



Maryland
INSURANCE ADMINISTRATION

**CAR
LIFE
HEALTH
RENTERS
HOMEOWNERS**



Ask MIA!

Listening Sessions: Commissioner Birrane created a series of virtual Listening Sessions to help the MIA more fully understand the experiences of specific communities relating to certain kinds of insurance. These Listening Sessions will assist us to fulfill our statutory mission to serve Marylanders both in our enforcement of Maryland's insurance laws and in our development of tools, guides, and programs for consumers. The Listening Session in FY21 have included: Financial Security (Life and Disability) Insurance Issues for the LGBTQ+ Community, The Role of Insurance in Addressing Health Care Inequities and Health Care Insurance Needs, and Challenges for Women and their Dependents.

Dedicated Spanish and Korean Website Sections: In FY2021, MIAThe Maryland Insurance Administration created special landing pages for all of our translated Spanish and Korean content.



En Español

Lea nuestras publicaciones para consumidores. Estos materiales brindan información sobre la mayoría de los tipos de seguros, desde pólizas de seguro de automóvil, de vivienda, de salud y de vida hasta anualidades, seguro de título y cobertura para embarcaciones.

Debido a COVID-19, la Administración de Seguros de Maryland no está participando en eventos en persona. Si su grupo comunitario, Asociación de Propietarios u organización está interesada en una presentación virtual, comuníquese con Kejuana Walton en

Spanish Publications

- Información General - Como la MIA puede ayudar
- Seguro sobre Automóvil, Motocicleta, Vehículo Todo Terreno (ATV), Vehículo Recreacional (RV) y Barco
- Seguro Para Propietario de Vivienda y Inquilinos
- Preparación para desastres incluyendo seguro contra inundaciones
- Commercial
- Seguro de Salud
- Seguro de Vida
- Fraude de Seguros
- Economía Compartida
- Recursos sobre COVID-19



한국어

저희소비자 발행물을 읽어 보세요. 이 발행물들은 자동차, 주택 소유자, 건강, 생명 보험에서부터 연금, 소유권, 보트보험의 보장까지 거의 모든 종류의 보험에 관한 정보를 제공합니다.

코로나19로 인해서, 메릴랜드 보험국은 직접 대면하는 이벤트에는 참여하지 않고 있습니다. 만일 당신의 커뮤니티 그룹, HOA, 또는 단체에서 저희 온라인 발표에 관심이 있으시면, Kejuana Walton에

게 kejuana.walton@maryland.gov 또는 410-468-2255로 연락주세요.

Korean Publications

- 일반적인 정보- MIA가 도울 수 있는 방법
- 자동차, 오토바이, 4륜 오토바이, 레저용 차량, 그리고 보트 보험
- 주택소유자보험과 세입자보험
- 홍수보험 포함한 자연재해 준비
- 상업보험
- 건강보험
- 생명보험
- 코로나19에 대한 정보

Future Plans

Our goal for FY22 is to continue the momentum the Department has gained with the reopening of our customer-interfacing offices while maintaining the customer service best practices that were implemented as a result of the pandemic for those opting to conduct their transactions online.

Governor Hogan has made customer service a priority from the beginning of his administration. The Governor's Customer Service Initiative requires all state agencies to produce a customer service annual report, and have a liaison dedicated to customer service. This liaison reports to regular meetings to discuss benchmarking and best practices. Maryland now has a record number of services and information available online which increases transparency and accessibility for the public. State agencies utilize multiple social media outreach platforms where the numbers of followers, and those who engage, are rapidly increasing. The Hogan-Rutherford administration will continue to strive to improve the overall customer experience through innovation, and by providing meaningful outcomes for all Maryland constituents, businesses, customers, and stakeholders.

The Department of Assessment and Taxation real-time processing feature was launched on June 30, giving customers the ability to see when their document(s) will be reviewed by the Department before and after they are submitted. In the coming months, the Department will also release same-day review and non-expedited filing options online.



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- **Friendly and Courteous:** We will be helpful and supportive and have a positive attitude and passion for what we do.
- **Timely and Responsive:** We will be proactive, take initiative, and anticipate your needs.
- **Accurate and Consistent:** We will always aim for 100% accuracy, and be consistent in how we interpret and implement state policies and procedures.
- **Accessible and Convenient:** We will continue to simplify and improve access to information and resources.
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for the Better

Larry Hogan, Governor • Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor