



# NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE



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## State tax refunds to be withheld from Marylanders with open warrants in Howard County

Some Maryland residents waiting for a state tax refund may find a letter in their mailboxes instead of a check if they currently have an open warrant in Howard County. The county Sheriff's Office and Police Department have entered into an agreement with the Maryland Comptroller's Office to withhold state tax refunds until outstanding warrants against the filer have been satisfied.

The Sheriff's Office, which provides judicial enforcement for the Circuit Court, currently has 349 open warrants for people who did not appear for court, violated their probations or committed other court violations. The Police Department, which handles criminal law enforcement and crime prevention in the county, has 1,665 open bench warrants for people who failed to appear in District Court or violated probations for various criminal violations and serious traffic charges.

"This arrangement provides our deputies with one more mechanism to ensure that the orders of the Circuit Court are complied with," said Sheriff William J. McMahon. "Some of these cases involve felons who have not shown up for sentencing or have violated the terms of their probation. Serving these warrants not only holds offenders accountable, it also brings closure to victims."

The Sheriff's Office began sending information to the Comptroller's Office a number of weeks ago and to date, 17 residents have received letters informing them that their state refunds are being withheld until they clear up their open warrants. Of those, five have already contacted the Sheriff's Office to satisfy their requirements.

The Police Department is sending its current open bench warrant list to the state today and will soon know how many of those Marylanders have filed for refunds, but will be receiving letters from the Comptroller instead.

"This program is a great way to locate people who need to clear up their records," said Police Chief Gary L. Gardner. "While some people do intentionally fail to show up for court, others may have moved to new addresses and may not even realize their names are on this list. Our hope is that this program will encourage people to come forward."

The agreement allowing collaboration between law enforcement and the Comptroller's Office was passed in 2016 in Maryland Senate Bill 425. "When this legislation passed, it offered a great opportunity to open communication and cooperation between our local law enforcement officials and the Maryland Comptroller's Office," said County Executive Allan H. Kittleman. "I'm glad our agencies in Howard County are taking advantage of this agreement to work with the state and give people the chance to resolve any outstanding issues."

Law enforcement agencies in Howard County have worked with the state in other ways to help encourage people to satisfy open warrants. For about 10 years, both the Sheriff's Office and Police Department have sent information to the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) about people who have outstanding arrest warrants for more than 30 days. The MVA suspends the licenses of those drivers and notifies them that they must clear up their warrants in order to reinstate a valid driver's license.

Anyone who is aware of an open warrant for his or her arrest can contact the Sheriff's Office at 410-313-2150 or the Police Department at 410-880-3302.

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