



WARNING: Scam Calls Targeting Recipients of Property Tax & Rent Rebates

Harrisburg, PA — The Department of Revenue on Thursday issued a warning to Pennsylvanians to be cautious of a scam targeting seniors and people with disabilities who receive rebates through the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.

The department has received information this week that the scam consists of unsolicited telephone calls from a person claiming to work for the Department of Revenue. The caller starts the call by saying the recipient's application for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program has been approved. The caller then asks if the recipient would like the rebate directly deposited into a bank account. That's followed by a request for the recipient's banking information.

"We want the public to be aware of this scam and know that the Department of Revenue does not make unsolicited calls requesting banking information," Revenue Secretary Dan Hassell said. "We know that criminals are always looking for new ways to take advantage of Pennsylvanians, which is why it is critical for everyone to protect their financial information and be extremely cautious when they receive unsolicited phone calls."

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is a program that annually provides property tax and rent relief to income-eligible seniors and people with

disabilities. Last year nearly 572,000 people received more than \$253 million through the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program. Since the program's inception in 1971, older and disabled adults have received more than \$6.9 billion in property tax and rent relief.

Here is some additional information on the program and tips to safeguard against this scam:

- The Department of Revenue **does not** collect applicants' banking information over the phone. Applicants are required to submit their bank account information on their application forms in order to receive their rebates through direct deposit.
- The Department of Revenue **does** contact applicants via automated calls to confirm their information has been received and approved. If the department needs more information about an individual's application, it sends a letter through the mail.
- Do not give out personal information over the phone to unsolicited callers, even if the caller claims to be from the Department of Revenue, the IRS or your bank.
- Do not trust the number you see on your caller ID, even if it appears to be coming from the Department of Revenue or the IRS. Scam artists increasingly use a technique known as spoofing to trick caller ID.
- Legitimate businesses and government agencies will not contact you to verify your account information, so ask for a call back number. Ask why your personal information is needed, how it will be used, how it will be protected, and what happens if you do not share it. Contact your bank or credit card company to confirm the call.
- If you received one of these scam calls and provided your banking information or other personal information, immediately call your bank to report this potential fraud.

About the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program:

The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians age 65 and older; widows and widowers age 50 and older; and people with disabilities age 18 and older. The income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters, and half of Social Security income is excluded.

The maximum standard rebate is \$650, but supplemental rebates for certain qualifying homeowners can boost rebates to \$975. The Department of Revenue automatically calculates supplemental rebates for qualifying homeowners.

As specified by law, rebate distributions cannot begin until July 1. After the initial distribution of rebates in early July, rebates will be distributed as claims are received and processed.

Applicants may obtain Property Tax/Rent Rebate claim forms (PA-1000) and related information on [the Department of Revenue's website](#) or by calling, toll-free, 1-888-222-9190. The application deadline for rebates on rent or property taxes paid in 2018 has been extended to Dec. 31, 2019.