

LD1713, An Act to Return Funds to Maine Property Taxpayers, and to provide an update on the status of the program.

Mailings: As of today, 280,000 of the 300,000+ property tax relief payments of \$104 have been mailed. Three more batches of roughly 10,000 each will be completed over the next few days, through next Monday, February 10th, completing the initial mailing.

How we are dealing with returned mail:

Mail that is returned as “temporarily away” is being held to be re-mailed on May 1. These are in no order, so we cannot research who may or may not be in that group. Any mail from the May 1 mailing that is returned will be considered “dead mail”.

Mail that is returned with a forwarding address is immediately sent back out the same day it comes in.

Mail that comes back with no forwarding address is considered “dead mail.” These are being kept in alphabetical order by last name, so that we can check there for anyone calling who hasn’t received their check. When we find a check, we send it out to the address as requested.

After 180 days, any checks not cashed will no longer be negotiable.

Any checks still held uncashed one year after the check’s issue date will be moved into unclaimed property under the owner/co-owner’s name(s), meaning that the amount is still theirs in our care, until they claim it.

Call Logs to You for Feedback: Our hotline is very busy, 207-624-7477 (press 3, then 2 if you are a person; press 3, then 1 if you are an assessor or municipality), between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. week days. We are logging hundreds of calls each day and will be sending you the call logs from your municipality in the coming days for you to provide guidance. In some cases, you will approve the request and I’m guessing in others, you will deny a particular request. We request that you turn this information around as quickly as possible.

Property Tax Hotline: When we get calls regarding an issue with the check, here is our process:

If the person references a deceased person on the check, we are generally immediately reissuing and asking that the original check be returned or destroyed. If destroyed, we **MUST** have the check number so we can cancel the check. We cannot reissue a check to someone without first canceling the original check.

If the person references a divorce and/or the need to take someone off the check, we are referring them to the municipality. We have no way of knowing who should or shouldn’t be on the check. We have merely provided checks to the names provided by the municipality. Please email us at propertytaxrelief@maine.gov to approve any names of people that contact you directly.

If the person is calling having received multiple checks, we are asking that they destroy a duplicate or send it back to us. If they destroy, we **MUST** have the check number so we can cancel the check. Duplicates have occurred because of data provided by the municipality. We have no way of knowing who should or shouldn’t be receiving a homestead exemption on one property or another and must rely on the data provided to us. We have found that some people have received duplicate checks.

If you have additional names for us to send checks to, please send those immediately. By law, we must have checks out to all qualifying recipients by March 1. Reissues and cancels to checks can occur up to and beyond that deadline.

Social Media: We have gotten lots of positive and constructive feedback on our Facebook page. This has been a great way to connect with people, let them know when checks are coming, and help them get their questions answered. We encourage you to check it out. Office of the Maine State Treasurer or @Maineost

Next Phase of Program: We will be using the updated addresses from this program to help reunite people with their unclaimed property. In an initial search, we found over 14,000 people in this program’s database of 300,000 that have unclaimed property being held by our office. As we work toward reuniting people with their property, we will be sharing information about that on our website and Facebook page. In one case, the property for one person was valued over \$40,000!