



Annual Tax Sale Ombudsman Report Fiscal Year 2023

Prepared by Corbett Webb – State Tax Sale Ombudsman

November 15, 2023



Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Michael Higgs | Director
Marcus Alzona | Deputy Director

November 15, 2023

The Honorable Wes Moore
Governor
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

The Honorable Bill Ferguson
President of the Senate
State House, H-107
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Speaker of the House
State House, H-101
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: Tax – Property Article §14-880(b) – Annual State Tax Sale Ombudsman Report (MSAR #13843)

Dear Governor Moore, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

Pursuant to Tax – Property Article §14-880(b), Annual State Tax Sale Ombudsman Report, the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation respectfully submits the attached report detailing the status of the Office of the State Tax Sale Ombudsman and an analysis of the Annual Tax Sale Survey as completed by Maryland Counties and Baltimore City.

As always, please feel free to follow up with me or other members of my team should you require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M Higgs".

Michael Higgs
Director

cc: Jonathan Glaser, Chief of Staff
Joshua Greenberg, Legislative Liaison
Corbett Webb, State Tax Sale Ombudsman
Sarah Albert, Department of Legislative Services (MSAR #13843)

The 2023 Annual Tax Sale Report

- I. The Office of the State Tax Sale Ombudsman..... Page 2
 - a. Overview..... Page 2
 - b. Homeowner Assistance Strategy..... Page 2
 - c. Applying for Homeowners’ and Homestead Tax Credits..... Page 3
 - d. Applying for Discount Programs and Public Benefits..... Page 3
 - e. Applying for Legal Services, Housing Counseling, and Other Social Services..... Page 4
- II. The Homeowner Protection Program..... Page 5
 - a. Overview..... Page 5
 - b. Future Expectations for the Homeowner Protection Program..... Page 5
- III. Tax Sale Initiatives..... Page 6
 - a. Annual Survey and Report Improvements..... Page 6
 - b. Legislative Accomplishments..... Page 8
 - c. Other Insights and Recommendations..... Page 10
- IV. The 2023 Annual Tax Sale Survey..... Page 12

I. The Office of the State Tax Sale Ombudsman

a. Overview

The mission of the State Tax Sale Ombudsman's Office (TSO) is to help homeowners navigate the tax sale process by providing the best tax sale information, assistance, and resources available. Since launching the TSO in January 2020, its Maryland Homeowners' Tax Sale Help Center website dat.maryland.gov/taxsale has been a centralized source of information and provides updates on each county's tax sale process, the up-to-date county-by-county tax sale schedule, and over 150 federal, state, and local resources to help homeowners in every Maryland county pay their property taxes and improve their financial situations.

Homeowners throughout the State can access individualized assistance with their delinquent property taxes and related issues by calling the Ombudsman's Tax Sale Helpline at (410) 767-4994, (833) 732-8411 toll free, or by emailing sdat.taxsale@maryland.gov. The Homeowner Protection Program also uses the same phone numbers and email address.

b. Homeowner Assistance Strategy

Homeowners contact the Office for assistance with a variety of issues related to tax sale. TSO staff are trained to listen carefully, show compassion and empathy, provide information, and discuss resources that may help. In particular, the Office seeks to understand the unique issues each homeowner is facing and to provide individualized assistance.

The homeowner assistance strategy starts with explaining the tax sale process, determining and explaining where the homeowner is in that process, and answering any questions they might have. Then, assistance is provided with communication with the county finance office, applying for tax credits and grants, connecting with a legal service provider when needed, and accessing financial and housing counseling. Homeowners occasionally also require help resolving issues with tax credit applications or updating their property's records with the local SDAT assessment office. The circumstances of homeowners seeking the TSO's assistance vary widely and often require an array of different solution strategies. The TSO staff make certain that homeowners know that if they encounter an obstacle, are unsure of the next steps, or have any questions, to contact the Office again.

From July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023 (FY23), at least 1,514 individual customers contacted the Office, although oftentimes there would be multiple subsequent conversations. 1,088 of these initial individual contacts were by phone, and 426 were by email. This is an increase from FY22, when an estimated 959 individual customers contacted the Office, 656 by phone and 303 by email. The FY22 is an estimate because a new phone system was implemented on August 23, 2021. This increase is likely due to efforts to make homeowners and the general public aware of the TSO and is despite the number of initial tax sale notices—all of which contain the Office's contact information—decreasing from 40,106 in FY22 to 38,601 in FY23. It is also important to note that Baltimore City, which advertises the most properties at tax sale, removed all owner-occupied properties from their 2022 tax sale, as they did in 2021. More than 90% of the FY23 customers were first-time contacts, which was also the case for FY22. This shows that awareness of the TSO's service, through its outreach partnerships throughout the state, continues to grow. The Department expects the volume of customer contacts to continue to increase

due to our expanded awareness campaigns and continued advertisement of the Homeowner Protection Program.

Staff utilize call scripts and checklists to make sure customers are informed about various resources available to them, including the Homeowner's and Homestead Property Tax Credits; discount programs and public benefits; and legal services, housing counseling, and other social services. Although the Department has the capacity to track these metrics, tracking stopped in January 2023 due to staff turnover and prioritizing implementation of the Homeowner Protection Program. The TSO is in the process of reviewing all prior call recordings and emails to fill in this information and will include the FY23 and FY24 metrics in the 2024 Annual Report.

c. Applying for Homeowners' and Homestead Tax Credits

Tax credits, and in particular the Homeowners' Property Tax Credit, are some of the Office's most important tools to help homeowners address their delinquent tax bills. TSO staff asks each homeowner whether they have applied for the Homestead Tax Credit and the current year's Homeowners' Property Tax Credit. They also check each homeowner's address in [SDAT's Real Property Search](#) portal, where application status can be viewed. The Office also helps homeowners who are over 70 apply for multiple years of the Homeowners' Property Tax Credit, as permitted by statute.

When a homeowner may qualify and has not applied, the TSO works closely with SDAT's Tax Credits division to assist homeowners through the application process. Sometimes, there is an urgent rush to help a homeowner access a credit to avoid inclusion in an upcoming tax sale. Other times, the homeowner has already applied, but their application is incomplete or is missing supporting documentation. The TSO offers the tax credit application as part of a checklist, along with other information and referrals, and they encourage homeowners to re-apply for the credit in future years once their immediate delinquent tax situation is resolved.

A very important resource for homeowners during FY23 was the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF). Among other benefits, the HAF provided grants of up to \$20,000 to homeowners at risk of losing their homes due to certain circumstances, including tax delinquency caused by financial hardship connected to the pandemic. This grant has helped many homeowners across the state avoid tax sale and tax sale foreclosure by making direct payments to county finance offices and lien purchasers on behalf of the homeowner, and the TSO regularly offered referrals to this program as part of each homeowner's assistance plan. HAF funding was exhausted on September 18, 2023.

d. Applying for Discount Programs or Public Benefits

The Office routinely helps homeowners apply for public benefits programs. Additionally, the majority of the homeowners assisted are referred to financial counselors, who regularly help homeowners apply for various public benefits and assistance programs, including ones not directly related to tax sale.

The most common benefits programs homeowners are referred to are the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides low- and no-income individuals and families with money to

buy food each month, and the Maryland Energy Assistance Programs, which provide low-income homeowners with financial assistance with heat and electric bills. These and other financial resources can help homeowners when they are assembling the funds they need to pay their tax bills.

e. Applying for Legal Services, Housing Counseling, and Other Social Services

1. *Legal Services*

The TSO does not provide legal advice, but it partners with nonprofit legal services that provide legal advice and assistance for free or reduced fees to qualifying homeowners. Homeowners' legal needs range from changing the title to a property after death and disputes over ownership to responding to tax foreclosure, as well as advice and representation in other civil legal issues. The Office also offers this service option whenever a homeowner states that they will not be able to pay their delinquent bill. Legal services are usually an important part of a list of resources the Office provides to homeowners based on their individual circumstances.

2. *Housing & Financial Counseling*

These service providers help homeowners create budgets, manage their finances, discuss housing finance options, and determine how to meet their current housing needs. They are nonprofits and community-based organizations approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. They are located across the state, serving local communities in every county. Many of their employees speak multiple languages, which helps us make referrals suited to the language needs of homeowners. Their services include financial management and budget counseling, credit workshops, mortgage delinquency and default resolution, prevention counseling and workshops, predatory lending education, reverse mortgage counseling, homeless counseling services, and rental housing counseling and workshops, among others.

3. *Government Assistance*

The Maryland Department of Human Services assists those in economic need and provides a variety of preventive and protective services to vulnerable Marylanders across the state. The Maryland Department of Aging helps homeowners aged 60 or older access assisted living, meals, medication management, caregiver support, transportation, personal care and healthy living, and dealing with diseases and injuries. The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's Homeowner Assistance Fund Grant program provides valuable assistance to homeowners with pandemic-related financial hardship. The Internal Revenue Service's Earned Income Tax Credit provides a financial benefit for individuals with low to moderate income. The Comptroller of Maryland offers income tax credits and deductions, including the Earned Income Tax Credit, Poverty Level Credit, Child and Dependent Care Credit, and Independent Living Tax Credit.

Finally, SDAT's Tax Credit division helps homeowners apply for the Homeowners' Property Tax Credit and Homestead Tax Credit. SDAT's local assessment offices help homeowners apply for the Disabled

Veteran's Exemption, Blind Individual or Surviving Spouse Exemption, and assist homeowners in updating property ownership/residence records and appealing property tax assessments.

II. The Homeowner Protection Program

a. Overview

In December 2022, the TSO launched the new Homeowner Protection Program (HPP) in accordance with Tax – Property Article §14-883 et sec. Enrollees to the program will benefit from being removed from the tax sale process and given a repayment plan that's tailored to their needs. Enrollees will also receive an individualized assistance strategy and ongoing support to connect them with resources, help pay their taxes, and improve their financial situations.

Homeowners are eligible to apply if they are in tax sale or are likely to end up in tax sale, reside in a home with an assessed value of \$300,000 or less, and have a combined gross household income of \$60,000 or less. Priority enrollment is given to homeowners who are at least 60 years old, have a net worth less than \$200,000 (not including the value of their property or any qualified retirement savings or Individual Retirement Accounts), whose dwelling has been their principal residence for at least 10 years as of the date of the application, or receives disability benefits from the federal supplemental security income program. The HPP is required to enroll at least one applicant from every county.

Once a homeowner is enrolled, the HPP will pay the county, municipality, or tax sale certificate holder the total amount of the homeowner's tax lien and assume exclusive responsibility for collecting any outstanding debt. The HPP will also become responsible for the total amount of any tax lien that subsequently becomes due on the dwelling during the period the homeowner is enrolled in the program and assumes exclusive responsibility for collecting that outstanding debt.

The Department was anticipating full enrollment in the HPP beginning in FY23. However, due to other temporary COVID-related benefit programs, which provided more lenient or generous assistance, the HPP instead worked with many would-be enrollees to apply for and receive additional benefits. In particular, the Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF), as described earlier in the report, provided a grant of up to \$20,000 to homeowners at risk of losing their homes due to certain circumstances, including tax delinquency caused by financial hardship connected to the pandemic. This grant helped many homeowners across the state avoid tax sale and tax sale foreclosure by making direct payments to county finance offices and lien purchasers on behalf of the homeowner. For these reasons, only eight homeowners were enrolled in the HPP during FY23.

b. Future Expectations for the Homeowner Protection Program

As a new and somewhat unique State program, the future of the HPP is exciting. As of September 2023, the HPP became fully staffed for the first time. HAF funding was exhausted on September 18, 2023, so the HPP expects full enrollment beginning in FY24.

As the HPP enrolls applicants, the Program plans to continue tweaking discretionary eligibility criteria and preferences to balance priorities of helping as many homeowners as possible while also helping

those most in need. Additionally, the sooner a homeowner can repay their loan and be placed on a solid financial footing for the future, the sooner they can be unenrolled from the Program, and another applicant can be enrolled in their place. For this reason, the HPP is developing procedures to have at least monthly individualized communications with every enrollee to ensure they remain on a path towards repayment and that our staff and the homeowner identify potential difficulties ahead of time so we can work proactively to avoid them. The TSO will include additional information about these processes and an analysis of their successes in the FY24 Annual Report.

Under current law, the HPP receives statutory funding of \$750,000 annually for FY23 through FY25 and received a \$1.3 million supplemental budget appropriation in FY23. Because the HPP Fund is non-lapsing, the Program is monitoring expenses closely to ensure the Program's longevity for as long as possible. The HPP anticipates full enrollment of around 75 homeowners in FY24, increasing to 125 in FY25. With existing funding, the Program expects to maintain similar enrollment figures through FY28. If a dedicated funding source were identified, the Program could continue to operate in perpetuity. As the Program reaches full enrollment in FY24 and FY25, the TSO will continue to monitor the Fund balance to inform recommendations on what future funding will be needed.

III. Tax Sale Initiatives

The Office is constantly considering ways to improve services for homeowners, whether or not those services are provided by this Office. Below are some anticipated improvements for the FY24 Annual Tax Sale Survey and Annual Tax Sale Report, legislative accomplishments, and other insights and recommendations.

a. Annual Tax Sale Survey and Annual Tax Sale Report Improvements

Beginning in 2021, the Annual Survey and Annual Report were revised to reflect prior year data because reporting current year data was a significant challenge for the counties and made reporting some data points impossible. Beginning in 2023, the Annual Survey was formalized in a fillable spreadsheet, making it easier for counties to report the data and easier for the TSO to compare submissions between counties and with other years' surveys. The following changes are being considered beginning with the 2024 Annual Tax Sale Survey and Annual Report.

1. Expanding on Fee Types Collected through Tax Sale

The FY23 Survey included an open-ended question for counties to report each type of charge they collect through their tax sale process. Although all counties collect property taxes through tax sale, and most counties collect water and sewer charges, the other types of fees and charges reported vary widely by county. Aside from property taxes and utility charges, counties collect more than 50 different types of fees and charges through tax sale, ranging from auctioneering fees to bay restoration fees to nuisance fees. In some instances, counties may have similar fees but use different names for those fees. The 2024 Survey will be revised to ask more pointed questions about fee types so that the Annual Report can better categorize and report on these "miscellaneous" fees.

2. Expanding on Interest Rates and Other Charges

The FY23 Survey required counties to report the monthly interest rate charged on overdue property taxes and the redemption annual interest rate a property owner must pay to redeem after tax sale, as applied to the county portion of property taxes due. However, some jurisdictions charge different interest rates on the state portion of property taxes owed as compared with the county portion. Some counties charge an additional monthly penalty rate on top of the interest rate, and other counties charge a one-time penalty fee after a certain period of time. Some counties charge different rates and fees for owner-occupied properties as compared to non-owner-occupied properties. The 2024 Survey will be revised to better categorize and report on these different types of interest charges and penalty fees.

3. Expanding on Minimum Threshold Amount of Unpaid Taxes for Tax Sale

The current Annual Survey requires counties to report on the minimum threshold amount of unpaid taxes on a residential property that will cause the county to put the property in tax sale. However, some jurisdictions have different minimum thresholds for owner-occupied as compared with non-owner-occupied properties. Some counties have a minimum threshold when one year's worth of property taxes are delinquent but a lower minimum threshold when multiple years' worth of property taxes are delinquent. The 2024 Survey will be revised to better categorize and report on these different types of minimum thresholds that exist in each county.

4. Properties Withheld from Tax Sale Under §14-811(e)

Tax – Property Article §14-811(e) allows a county to withhold from tax sale a dwelling owned by a homeowner who is low-income, at least 65 years old, or disabled, if the homeowner meets eligibility criteria established by the county or municipal corporation. Several counties reported that they didn't withhold any properties under this specific provision but did withhold properties on a case-by-case basis under other legal authority for similar reasons. The 2024 Survey will be revised to better capture this information.

5. Identifying Bulk Tax Sales

Some counties have their standard tax sale during the first half of the calendar year and then have another bulk tax sale later in the year, where properties are sold in groups and, a bid must be placed for all properties in a group. In the future, the TSO will work with counties to better understand their bulk tax sale processes, how properties are moved from the standard tax sale to the bulk tax sale, and what impact this process has on the various parties involved.

6. Complete Responses to the Survey, Reporting Disaggregated Owner-occupied Data

Due to system limitations, it remains a challenge for some counties to report some of the information required by the Annual Survey, including disaggregated owner-occupancy data. For the 2023 Annual Survey, Baltimore County was unable to provide some of this information because they were implementing a new Information Technology system but expect to be able to provide the information in 2024 once their new system is implemented. Calvert and Prince George's Counties responded that they were unable to provide some information. Before the 2024 Annual Survey, TSO will work with these counties to better understand their technical limitations and determine a solution to provide the required information for the 2024 Annual Survey, to be included in the 2024 Annual Report.

7. Analyzing and Visualizing Data Comparisons for Multiple Years

Although the 2023 TSO Annual Report is the fourth Annual Report, it has been challenging to compare prior years' data because of the many temporary changes that resulted from COVID-19, such as counties canceling or delaying their annual tax sales. Now that data can more easily be compared year after year, the TSO will identify comparisons over time and between different counties that can be displayed through graphics and visualizations. This will make it easier to identify trends in specific jurisdictions and across the state.

b. Legislative Accomplishments

In the 2021 and 2022 sessions of the Maryland General Assembly, legislative sponsors, and the TSO successfully advocated for a series of strategic legislative changes to improve homeowners' access to tax credits, grant them critical extra time to redeem a sold tax lien, and provide a second chance when they missed an application deadline or weren't aware of it. The following efforts were successfully championed in 2023:

CH271 (HB43), Property Tax - Tax Sales - Payment of Balance After Foreclosure

This bill requires each county to establish a process for a person entitled to any remaining balance of the purchase price of a property sold at a tax sale – over the amount required for the payment of taxes, interest, penalties, and costs of sale – to claim the balance. The process must be applied uniformly to all claims for balances within the county and may not require a court order unless there is a dispute regarding payment of the balance.

CH272 (HB57), Property Tax – Tax Sales – Requirement to Sell

This bill repeals limitations on the authority of local governments to set the time by which a property with taxes in arrears must be sold by the tax collector.

CH273 (HB83), Property Tax – Tax Sales – Redemption

This bill requires a tax collector to make at least one attempt to contact a holder of a certificate of sale by phone and email after the collector is informed that the plaintiff or the holder of the certificate of sale has failed to respond to a request, for the amount of expenses included in the redemption amount, that is made by the (1) owner of the property; (2) current mortgagee of the property, assignee of a mortgagee of record, or servicer of the current mortgage; or (3) current holder of a beneficial interest in a deed of trust recorded against the property. If the plaintiff or holder of the certificate of sale fails to respond within five business days, the tax collector may redeem the property without a satisfaction letter stating that the expenses of the plaintiff or the holder of a certificate of sale have been paid.

CH274 (HB21), Property Tax – Tax Sales – Notices and Payoff Amount for Redemption

This bill authorizes an owner of owner-occupied residential property – that has been sold at a tax sale and for which a complaint to foreclose the right of redemption has not yet been filed – to request, from the holder of the certificate of sale, the current payoff amount to redeem the property.

CH315 (HB235), Tax Sales – Owner-Occupied Property - Foreclosure, Notice, and Reimbursement of Expenses

This bill makes extended time periods that were only applicable to owner-occupied residential property in Baltimore City – that govern when a complaint to foreclose the right to redeem a property sold in a tax sale can first be filed, when a related notice can first be sent, and when related expenses can be reimbursed – applicable to owner-occupied residential property statewide. As a result, in jurisdictions other than Baltimore City, the bill (1) increases the amount of time that must pass – after an owner-occupied residential property is sold at a tax sale and before a holder of a certificate of sale can first file a foreclosure complaint – from six months to nine months, and (2) increases the amount of time that must pass – after an owner-occupied residential property is sold at a tax sale and before the holder of a certificate of sale can first send a required foreclosure notice and be reimbursed for expenses relating to filing a foreclosure complaint – from four months to seven months.

CH316 (HB236), Tax Sales – Homeowner Protection Program – Outreach

This bill establishes the intent of the General Assembly that at least 2% of the balance in the Homeowner Protection Fund be spent each year to conduct specified outreach to encourage homeowners in tax sale to enroll in the Homeowner Protection Program.

CH528 (SB826 / HB897), Homeowners' Property Tax Credit - Qualified Homeowner - Application and Certification Requirements

This bill alters the application requirements for the Homeowners' Property Tax Credit program for individuals who receive income only from social security, a pension, or an annuity. In these situations, the homeowner must submit a regular application in the first year that the individual applies for the property tax credit and a more abbreviated certification for the next two years. In the following third year, the homeowner will once again have to submit a regular application in order to remain eligible for the property tax credit.

Building on these achievements, the TSO looks forward to advocating for additional solutions in 2024.

c. Additional Insights and Recommendations

1. Partial Property Tax Payments & Payment Plans

Counties have varying processes when it comes to a homeowners' ability to make partial property tax payments and enroll in a county-run payment plan. For example, counties have different policies regarding the availability of semi-annual tax billing, partial tax payments, payment plans, and minimum payments to remove the property from tax sale. The 2024 Annual Survey will be revised to include information regarding each counties' availability of payment plans and their acceptance of partial payments.

As was reported in the 2022 Annual Report, some homeowners continue to report that it is a challenge to pay their tax bills on an annual or semi-annual basis. They regularly inquire about whether a payment plan is available, describe how they could afford a monthly bill, and often describe a specific monthly amount they could afford to pay.

Sending out monthly bills is not likely practical, affordable, or manageable for the counties. However, there are structured payment plan models where a third-party provider manages a payment plan system. Partnering with third-party billing services could help homeowners to budget their tax bills throughout the year. It wouldn't require the counties to change to a monthly billing system, which could be prohibitively expensive and labor-intensive, nor would counties have to administer a payment plan option. There would be no cost to the state or the counties, and homeowners would likely prefer paying a reasonable fee charged by the provider for their service to struggling with the semi-annual bill.

2. Timely Sharing of Data and Public Access to Aspects of the Tax Sale Process

Although counties provide the TSO with a robust amount of information in the Annual Survey, that information is limited to prior-year data and often is not timely enough to be able to immediately assist homeowners. The TSO plans to discuss with the counties ways that they can send us a report of all properties involved at different stages of the tax sale process so we can immediately assist homeowners who contact us directly. For example, counties can send us a list of all properties that received an initial tax sale notice as the notices go out, counties can send us a list of all properties that are listed for tax sale once the list is created, etc.

The TSO will also discuss with the counties whether this information can or should be made accessible to the public so homeowners can easily confirm what stage they are at in the tax sale process. Some counties already post this information online, while others do not.

3. Financial Literacy

As discussed in the 2022 Annual Report, in discussions with partner service providers, county finance officers, and homeowners, one of the major factors contributing to tax sales is the need for financial knowledge and skills training to help homeowners make informed and effective decisions with their financial resources. Homeowners in tax sale continue to report that they regularly fall behind in paying their bills and that once they accumulate debt, they feel overwhelmed with no plan for how to pay it off.

Most homeowners facing tax sale on their principal residence have some income and almost always have no mortgage. However, they often report that they are in need of a plan or strategy to pay their taxes on time. In addition to assistance from this Office and referrals to financial counseling services, additional financial literacy initiatives would help homeowners with financial decisions and money management and help them avoid tax sale. The TSO will continue to seek out partnerships that further these efforts in the future.

4. A “One-stop Shop” for Homeowner Assistance

There are dozens, if not hundreds, of potential resources available to assist homeowners, but they are spread across federal, state, and local government agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations. Navigating these different organizations can not only be frustrating and confusing for homeowners but also overwhelming to the point where homeowners stop trying. The TSO is committed to making it as easy as possible to navigate these resources and provides information on more than 150 resources on dat.maryland.gov/taxsale. However, a more modern and intuitive platform for connecting homeowners to resources would be helpful to assist as many people as possible. For example, one website where you enter certain basic information and a checklist tailored to each homeowner’s response is populated, making it as easy as possible for homeowners to contact those organizations to learn more about assistance available to them and self-monitor their progress. The TSO will be investigating ways to make this idea a reality in the future.

IV. Summary & Analysis of the 2023 Annual Tax Sale Survey

The following is a summary and analysis of information reported by the counties in response to the TSO's fourth Annual Tax Sale Survey, described in Tax Property Article §14-879. The fourth Survey again asks 50 questions about each county's tax sale processes, policies, and detailed data from their tax sales. It also collects data on bid balance excess funds as well as redemption and foreclosure data from the preceding tax year.

Although every Maryland county responded to the 2023 Annual Tax Sale Survey, providing valuable insights into their tax sale processes, Baltimore, Calvert, and Prince George's Counties were unable to provide certain information. Baltimore County expects to be able to provide this information in 2024 when a new IT system is implemented. Section III, Tax Sale Initiatives, on page 9 of this Annual Report, explains how these omissions will be resolved for future years.

This year's survey covers the 2022 tax sales of counties as well as the redemptions and foreclosures that occurred in FY22. This prior-year reporting strategy gives the counties a more manageable schedule on which to assemble the data and provide responses than reporting about activity in the same year as the survey.

COUNTY TAX SALE PROCESSES & POLICIES

1. Fee Types Collected through Tax Sale, FY22.

Each county collects a variety of charges through the tax sale process. All counties include property taxes, and 19 counties include water and sewer charges. The other types of fees and charges vary widely by county and include municipal charges, code violations, advertisement fees, county penalty fees, environmental charges, auctioneer fees, clean-up / maintenance charges, personal property taxes, abandoned property fees, attorney fees, special assessments, nuisance fees, hotel/motel fees, PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) loans, agricultural tax penalties, bay restoration fees, system benefits charges, benefit assessments, front foot/capital facility assessment charges, property clearing abatement charges, special benefit district surcharge bills, registration fees, town maintenance fees, interest cost fees, and town certification fees. Section III, Tax Sale Initiatives, on page 8 of this Annual Report, explains how this question will be improved in future years.

2. *Required Time Overdue for Tax Sale Eligibility, FY22.*

The length of time the tax on a property is required to be overdue before the county includes the property on their tax sale eligibility list ranges from as soon as the current year tax bill is delinquent to three years past due. Table 2 shows the range by county.

Table 2. Required Time Overdue for Tax Sale Eligibility – FY22

Counties	Required Time Overdue
Baltimore County, Caroline, Harford, Queen Anne's, Talbot	Same tax year
Baltimore City, Howard	30 days
Prince George's	3 months
Montgomery	4 months
Frederick	5 months
Carroll	6 months
Charles	8 months
Washington, Wicomico	9 months
Cecil	11 months
Garrett	1 year
Anne Arundel, St. Mary's	14 months
Calvert	18 months
Dorchester, Kent, Somerset, Worcester	2 years
Allegany	3 years

3. *2022 County Tax Sale Schedule.*

Every county conducts a tax sale annually. Tax sales are typically held between March and June and are completed prior to the next year's tax billing cycle that starts on July 1. Table 3 shows the month when each county held its 2022 tax sale.

Table 3. 2022 County Tax Sale Schedule – by Month

Month	Counties
March	St. Mary's
May	Allegany, Baltimore City, Caroline, Charles, Frederick, Garrett, Howard, Kent, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, Talbot, Worcester
June	Anne Arundel, Calvert, Carroll, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Montgomery, Somerset, Washington, Wicomico
October	Baltimore County*

** In 2022 and 2023, Baltimore County held its tax sale in October due to implementing a new IT system. When system implementation is complete in 2024, the county may move its tax sale back to June.*

4. Municipal Corporation Tax Sales.

Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County have no incorporated towns or cities. Eighteen of the remaining 21 counties conduct tax sales on behalf of municipal corporations. The three counties that do not are Garrett, Montgomery, and Worcester Counties.

5. Interest Charged on Overdue Property Taxes, FY22.

The monthly rate of interest counties charge on overdue county property taxes ranges from 0.5% to 2%. See Table 4 below.

6. Interest Charged to Redeem After Tax Sale, FY22.

The annual rate of redemption interest a property owner is required to pay to redeem the property after a tax sale ranges from 6% to 20%. This amount is paid to the lien purchaser, and counties report that one of the main factors they use to determine their interest rate is whether they can attract bidders to their tax sales. See Table 4 below.

Table 4. Overdue Property Tax Redemption Interest Charged by County - FY22

County	Overdue property taxes monthly rate	Redemption interest annual rate
Allegany	1.50%	18.00%
Anne Arundel	0.50%	18.00%
Baltimore City	2.00%	12.00%
Baltimore County	1.00%	12.00%
Calvert	1.00%	10.00%
Caroline	1.00%	10.00%
Carroll	0.67%	14.00%
Cecil	1.00%	12.00%
Charles	1.00%	12.00%
Dorchester	1.00%	10.00%
Frederick	1.00%	8.00%
Garrett	1.50%	10.00%
Harford	1.50%	12.00%
Howard	1.50%	18.00%
Kent	1.50%	10.00%
Montgomery	1.67%	20.00%
Prince George's	0.67%	8.00%
Queen Anne's	1.00%	12.00%
Somerset	1.00%	12.00%
St. Mary's	1.00%	6.00%
Talbot	1.50%	6.00%
Washington	1.00%	6.00%
Wicomico	1.00%	8.00%
Worcester	1.00%	10.00%

Section III, Tax Sale Initiatives, on page 8 of this Annual Report, explains how this table will be improved in future years.

7. Redemption Period, FY22.

The redemption period is determined by statute. This is the period after a tax sale when the homeowner may pay off the lien on (or “redeem”) their property. The homeowner has the right to redeem their property at any time after a tax sale up until a circuit court judge signs an order to foreclose their right of redemption in favor of the tax lien purchaser.

Three months after a foreclosure order has been signed, if the lien purchaser has not transferred title to their name by paying their bid amount to the county and recording a deed, the homeowner may file a motion to strike foreclosure and regain their right to redeem and clear their title. In the 23 counties, the earliest the lien purchaser may file a motion to foreclose the owner’s right to redeem is six months after the date of the tax sale. In Baltimore City, the earliest a lien purchaser may file this motion for an owner-occupied residential property is nine months after the date of the tax sale.

Two years after the date of the tax sale, an investor who has not filed this motion loses their right to foreclose, and they forfeit any funds paid to the local jurisdiction. When this happens, the homeowner may still redeem the property by paying off the county’s remaining lien amount. If the lien continues to remain unpaid, the county may sell the lien in its next tax sale. Note that this timeline will be updated on January 1, 2024 in accordance with House Bill 235 (Ch. 315, Acts of 2023).

8. Minimum Threshold Amount of Unpaid Taxes for the 2022 Tax Sale.

The minimum threshold amount of unpaid taxes on a residential property that will cause the county to put the property in tax sale ranges from no threshold (any delinquent amount) to \$750 across the State and may be subject to change each year by the county. Where partial payments are permitted, if the homeowner makes a partial payment that brings the balance below the threshold amount, the county will remove the property from their tax sale list for that year. The homeowner still owes the remaining unpaid balance, but they’ll have more time to pay and won’t incur the added interest and fees associated with redeeming the property after a lien has been sold at tax sale. See Table 5 below.

Table 5. Minimum Threshold Amount Unpaid for the 2022 Tax Sale

Counties	Minimum threshold amount unpaid
Baltimore City	\$750 owner-occupied \$250 non-owner occupied
Caroline	\$750 owner-occupied \$250 non-owner occupied Any amount if more than 1 year delinquent
Carroll	\$750 Any amount if more than 5 years delinquent
Cecil	\$750
Baltimore County	\$500 owner-occupied \$250 non-owner occupied
Prince George's	\$500
Calvert	\$251
Anne Arundel, Charles, Frederick, Garrett, Harford, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Wicomico	\$250
Somerset	\$250 Any amount if more than 5 years delinquent
Worcester	\$200
Talbot	\$50
Queen Anne's	\$25
Allegany, Dorchester, St. Mary's, Washington	\$0

Section III, Tax Sale Initiatives, on page 8 of this Annual Report, explains how this table will be improved in future years.

9. Establishment of a County Tax Sale Ombudsman.

Of the 24 jurisdictions, only Baltimore City reports they have established by local ordinance a local Tax Sale Ombudsman to fulfill all the responsibilities in accordance with Tax Property Article §2-112(d). However, most counties report that they have designated specific county officers to assist homeowners with tax sale-related matters.

10. Properties Withheld from Tax Sale Under §14-811(e) & Eligibility Criteria, FY22.

Only Harford County reported the withholding of one property from their 2022 tax sale under Tax Property Article §14-811(e). This provision allows a county to withhold from sale a dwelling owned by a

homeowner who is low-income, at least 65 years old, or disabled, if the homeowner meets eligibility criteria established by the county or municipal corporation. Section III, Tax Sale Initiatives, on page 8 of this Annual Report explains how this question will be improved in future years.

BID BALANCE FUNDS

These funds are the lien purchaser's bid amount paid to the county when the purchaser takes title to the home, minus the amount owed for taxes, interest, penalties, and sale costs. If the homeowner loses their property, they are entitled to claim from the county these funds paid by the lien purchaser at title transfer that are in excess of what is owed.

1. Total Funds Held and Distributed, FY22.

According to the survey responses, the amount of bid balance money held by each county in a special fund pending distribution to property owners in FY22 ranges from zero to just over \$8 million. See Table 6 below.

2. Funds Distributed to Property Owners, FY22.

According to the survey responses, the amount of bid balance funds distributed to property owners between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022, ranged from \$0 to nearly \$2 million. See Table 6 below.

Table 6. Bid Balance Funds Held & Distributed to Property Owners – FY22

County	Funds Held	Funds Distributed
Allegany	\$560,429.00	\$55,237.00
Anne Arundel	\$2,555,466.63	\$774,715.59
Baltimore City	\$7,018,027.00	\$870,492.00
Baltimore County	\$1,745,247.08	\$1,564,041.77
Calvert	*	*
Caroline	\$40,573.49	\$15,339.06
Carroll	\$55,982.71	\$0.00
Cecil	\$79,280.49	\$197,133.86
Charles	\$567,357.43	\$125,655.64
Dorchester	\$342,285.00	\$94,847.00
Frederick	\$202,430.00	\$30,298.00
Garrett	\$56,545.00	\$56,477.00
Harford	\$397,192.15	\$206,892.54
Howard	\$655,056.00	\$0.00
Kent	\$124,373.00	\$0.00
Montgomery	\$2,993,951.10	\$1,920,518.52
Prince George's	\$8,280,401.50	\$1,069,413.31
Queen Anne's	\$107,856.00	\$0.00
Somerset	\$75,961.92	\$196,245.24
St. Mary's	\$34,646.67	\$64,291.79
Talbot	\$40,047.80	\$0.00
Washington	\$287,244.92	\$98,051.86
Wicomico	*	*
Worcester	\$41,777.15	\$51,041.36

*Calvert County was unable to provide this information.

3. *Funds That Were Transferred to the County, FY22.*

Only three counties reported that in FY22 funds were transferred from an escrow account pending distribution to prior homeowners to their general fund. Montgomery County transferred \$16,683.92; Somerset County transferred \$219,575.69; and Washington County transferred \$69,904.

2022 TAX SALES

1. Property Liens Advertised in the First Notice.

According to 2023 survey responses, the total number of property liens advertised in the first notice for all counties that held a tax sale in 2022 was 38,601. The largest number advertised was 19,304 in Baltimore City. The next largest was 3,896 in Prince George's County, then 2,206 in Anne Arundel County. The smallest was 161 in Worcester County. The average lien amount for all properties advertised in the first notice in 2022 was \$4,271. Table 7a shows this range.

Table 7a. All Liens Advertised in the First Notice – 2022 Tax Sales

County	Total parcels advertised	Total lien amount	Average lien amount
Allegany	763	\$2,536,259.00	\$3,324.00
Anne Arundel	2,206	\$8,084,807.75	\$3,664.92
Baltimore City	19,304	\$394,530,713.59	\$20,437.77
Baltimore County	1,055	\$6,921,029.89	\$6,560.00
Calvert	741	\$568,944.71	\$767.81
Caroline	322	\$1,144,374.15	\$3,553.96
Carroll	311	\$1,258,334.86	\$4,046.09
Cecil	718	\$2,359,909.43	\$3,286.78
Charles	555	\$3,063,830.74	\$5,520.42
Dorchester	192	\$419,153.00	\$2,183.09
Frederick	847	\$2,127,157.68	\$2,511.40
Garrett	244	\$648,996.76	\$2,659.82
Harford	925	\$2,308,703.28	\$2,495.90
Howard	1,161	\$5,668,212.95	\$4,882.18
Kent	378	\$1,553,499.31	\$4,109.79
Montgomery	1,780	\$8,625,552.19	\$4,845.82
Prince George's	3,896	\$20,396,756.56	\$5,235.31
Queen Anne's	415	\$735,827.46	\$1,773.08
Somerset	220	\$457,477.82	\$2,079.44
St. Mary's	320	\$856,155.24	\$2,675.49
Talbot	202	\$546,971.48	\$2,707.78
Washington	524	\$2,594,108.82	\$4,950.59
Wicomico	1,361	\$4,676,570.82	\$3,436.13
Worcester	161	\$773,284.03	\$4,803.01

The total number of owner-occupied parcels advertised for the 2022 tax sales, not including Baltimore and Calvert Counties (see below), was 12,965. Of these, the average lien amount was \$3,036. Table 7b shows each county's number of parcels and lien amounts.

Table 7b. Owner-occupied Liens Advertised - 2022 Tax Sales

County	Owner Occupied Parcels	Total Lien Amount	Average Lien Amount
Allegany	159	\$642,476.00	\$4,041.00
Anne Arundel	1223	\$3,613,759.58	\$2,954.83
Baltimore City	4861	\$19,148,746.55	\$3,939.26
Baltimore County	*	*	*
Calvert	*	*	*
Caroline	143	\$320,852.20	\$2,243.72
Carroll	162	\$590,800.35	\$3,646.91
Cecil	380	\$1,127,751.57	\$2,959.98
Charles	145	\$543,626.76	\$3,749.15
Dorchester	63	\$188,417.65	\$2,990.76
Frederick	480	\$1,081,249.22	\$2,252.60
Garrett	45	\$143,899.40	\$3,197.76
Harford	487	\$932,335.12	\$1,914.45
Howard	711	\$2,414,218.26	\$3,395.52
Kent	140	\$345,925.14	\$2,470.89
Montgomery	798	\$3,028,010.13	\$3,794.50
Prince George's	1819	\$6,719,312.99	\$3,693.96
Queen Anne's	267	\$454,964.41	\$1,703.99
Somerset	69	\$162,846.83	\$2,360.10
St. Mary's	104	\$476,958.72	\$4,586.14
Talbot	109	\$219,633.55	\$2,014.99
Washington	197	\$381,244.39	\$1,935.25
Wicomico	550	\$1,300,118.06	\$2,363.86
Worcester	53	\$242,861.88	\$4,582.30

** Baltimore County was unable to provide this information due to implementing a new Information Technology system but will be able to provide this information again in future years. Calvert County was unable to provide this information.*

2. *Property Liens Offered for Sale.*

In 2022, the total number of property liens offered for sale was 15,884. The largest number of liens offered for sale by a county was 5,807 in Baltimore City. Table 8a shows the total number of liens offered, the total lien amount, and the average lien amount for each county.

Table 8a. All Liens Offered for Sale & Lien Amounts - 2022 Tax Sales

County	Offered for sale	Total lien amount	Average lien amount
Allegany	424	\$1,358,390.00	\$3,204.00
Anne Arundel	1,283	\$4,305,696.95	\$3,355.96
Baltimore City	5,807	\$235,433,455.88	\$40,543.04
Baltimore County	712	\$4,136,356.94	\$5,809.00
Calvert	639	\$5,012,129.06	\$7,843.71
Caroline	149	\$452,049.00	\$3,034.00
Carroll	62	\$268,425.82	\$4,329.45
Cecil	319	\$1,126,412.60	\$3,531.07
Charles	390	\$2,584,976.37	\$6,628.14
Dorchester	92	\$201,735.00	\$2,193.00
Frederick	275	\$528,656.00	\$1,922.00
Garrett	175	\$295,080.03	\$1,686.17
Harford	231	\$765,731.52	\$3,314.86
Howard	399	\$2,917,811.00	\$7,313.00
Kent	211	\$1,256,443.62	\$5,954.71
Montgomery	1,075	\$5,480,895.77	\$5,098.51
Prince George's	2,243	\$13,143,826.71	\$5,859.93
Queen Anne's	192	\$303,976.00	\$1,588.00
Somerset	126	\$262,279.82	\$2,081.59
St. Mary's	168	\$343,416.00	\$2,044.00
Talbot	96	\$263,108.03	\$2,740.71
Washington	214	\$1,999,354.00	\$9,343.00
Wicomico	558	\$3,174,352.69	\$5,688.81
Worcester	44	\$184,417.53	\$4,191.31

The total number of owner-occupied parcels offered for sale in the 2022 tax sales, not including Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Calvert County (see below), was 3,653. Of these, the average lien amount was \$2,931. Baltimore City and Baltimore County did not offer any owner-occupied parcels in their 2022 tax sales. Table 8b shows each county's number of parcels and total and average lien amounts.

Table 8b. Owner-occupied Liens Offered for Sale - 2022 Tax Sales

County	Parcels Owner Occupied	Total Lien	Average Lien
Allegany	47	\$186,896.00	\$3,976.51
Anne Arundel	662	\$1,916,636.05	\$2,895.22
Baltimore City	None		
Baltimore County	None		
Calvert	*	*	*
Caroline	53	\$119,756.00	\$2,259.55
Carroll	27	\$82,665.67	\$3,061.69
Cecil	143	\$341,853.69	\$2,390.59
Charles	113	\$441,402.21	\$3,906.21
Dorchester	22	\$66,518.00	\$3,023.55
Frederick	275	\$528,656.00	\$1,922.39
Garrett	22	\$55,179.79	\$2,508.17
Harford	97	\$192,670.15	\$1,986.29
Howard	197	\$910,964.97	\$4,624.19
Kent	50	\$117,197.57	\$2,343.95
Montgomery	505	\$1,957,102.45	\$3,875.45
Prince George's	914	\$3,429,595.42	\$3,752.29
Queen Anne's	121	\$208,775.00	\$1,725.41
Somerset	36	\$66,014.00	\$1,833.72
St. Mary's	42	\$170,714.00	\$4,064.62
Talbot	42	\$69,976.74	\$1,666.11
Washington	51	\$110,623.00	\$2,169.08
Wicomico	222	\$690,867.86	\$3,112.02
Worcester	12	\$53,362.28	\$4,446.86

* Calvert County was unable to provide this information.

3. Property Liens for Water and Sewer Service.

Charles, Howard, Prince George's, Washington, and Wicomico Counties offered no liens in their 2022 tax sales for water or sewer service only. Table 9a shows each counties' total number of liens offered and total and average lien amounts.

Table 9a. All Liens Offered for Sale for Water & Sewer Only - 2022 Tax Sales

County	Total parcels	Total lien amount	Average lien amount
Allegany	26	\$66,853.00	\$2,571.27
Anne Arundel	281	\$227,160.30	\$808.40
Baltimore City	122	\$1,897,975.85	\$15,557.18
Baltimore County	1	\$6,224.00	\$6,224.00
Calvert	7	\$13,829.50	\$1,975.64
Caroline	16	\$25,898.00	\$1,618.63
Carroll	5	\$9,896.09	\$1,979.22
Cecil	66	\$98,942.96	\$1,499.14
Charles	None		
Dorchester	18	\$12,676.00	\$704.22
Frederick	145	\$94,791.00	\$653.73
Garrett	4	\$6,415.00	\$1,603.75
Harford	24	\$23,322.28	\$971.76
Howard	None		
Kent	56	\$234,006.78	\$4,178.69
Montgomery	3	\$2,132.42	\$710.81
Prince George's	None		
Queen Anne's	66	\$51,841.00	\$785.47
Somerset	26	\$32,982.00	\$1,268.54
St. Mary's	21	\$40,877.00	\$1,946.52
Talbot	27	\$24,595.03	\$910.93
Washington	None		
Wicomico	None		
Worcester	1	\$2,392.28	\$2,392.28

Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Charles, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties reported no owner-occupied liens were sold in their 2022 tax sales for water or sewer service only. Table 9b shows each county's number of parcels offered and total and average lien amounts.

Table 9b. Owner-occupied Liens Offered for Water & Sewer Only - 2022 Tax Sales

County	Owner occupied parcels	Total lien amount	Average lien amount
Allegany	11	\$23,315.00	\$2,119.55
Anne Arundel	225	\$178,737.91	\$794.39
Calvert	7	\$13,829.50	\$1,975.64
Caroline	11	\$19,319.00	\$1,756.27
Carroll	5	\$9,896.09	\$1,979.22
Cecil	47	\$74,254.04	\$1,579.87
Dorchester	5	\$3,840.00	\$768.00
Frederick	114	\$70,682.00	\$620.02
Garrett	3	\$2,735.00	\$911.67
Harford	11	\$11,176.17	\$1,016.02
Kent	32	\$46,851.02	\$1,464.09
Queen Anne's	60	\$49,042.00	\$817.37
Somerset	16	\$22,297.00	\$1,393.56
St. Mary's	12	\$25,991.00	\$2,165.92
Talbot	19	\$18,874.09	\$993.37

4. Property Liens Sold.

It's important to note that a lien being sold does not mean the property is sold. At the annual tax sale, each county sells liens against properties whose owners owe outstanding amounts to the county. The counties do not sell the physical properties. After the tax sale, the owner of the property itself does not change. Table 10a shows each county's total number of liens sold and their total and average lien amounts.

Table 10a. All Liens Sold - 2022 Tax Sales

County	Total parcels	Total lien amount	Average lien amount
Allegany	265	\$931,968.00	\$3,516.86
Anne Arundel	1,194	\$4,050,608.79	\$3,392.47
Baltimore City	3,285	\$12,010,504.50	\$3,656.17
Baltimore County	467	\$2,189,494.02	\$4,688.42
Calvert	161	\$1,181,988.77	\$7,341.55
Caroline	132	\$313,635.00	\$2,376.02
Carroll	61	\$266,057.70	\$4,361.60
Cecil	276	\$684,220.65	\$2,479.06
Charles	335	\$1,229,213.49	\$3,669.29
Dorchester	92	\$201,735.42	\$2,192.78
Frederick	514	\$1,124,329.00	\$2,187.41
Garrett	98	\$216,956.00	\$2,213.84
Harford	212	\$529,963.65	\$2,499.83
Howard	376	\$1,980,486.00	\$5,267.25
Kent	146	\$359,283.56	\$2,460.85
Montgomery	1,075	\$5,480,895.77	\$5,098.51
Prince George's	2,053	\$8,857,783.49	\$4,314.56
Queen Anne's	190	\$303,594.00	\$1,597.86
Somerset	112	\$177,275.19	\$1,582.81
St. Mary's	168	\$342,912.00	\$2,041.14
Talbot	91	\$190,143.63	\$2,089.49
Washington	171	\$464,552.00	\$2,716.68
Wicomico	486	\$1,127,026.88	\$2,318.99
Worcester	44	\$184,417.53	\$4,191.31

The total number of owner-occupied liens sold in the 2022 tax sales, not including Calvert and Prince George's Counties, was 2,708. The average lien amount was \$2,723. Baltimore City and Baltimore County did not list any owner-occupied properties in their 2022 tax sale. Table 10b shows each county's total number of owner-occupied liens sold and their total and average lien amounts.

Table 10b. Owner-occupied Liens Sold - 2022 Tax Sales

County	Owner occupied parcels	Total Lien Amount	Average Lien Amount
Allegany	45	\$145,849	\$3,241.09
Anne Arundel	662	\$1,916,636.05	\$2,895.22
Baltimore City	None		
Baltimore County	None		
Calvert	*	*	*
Caroline	53	\$119,756	\$2,259.55
Carroll	27	\$82,665.67	\$3,061.69
Cecil	141	\$334,244.44	\$2,370.53
Charles	101	\$346,786.00	\$3,433.52
Dorchester	20	\$53,820.35	\$2,691.20
Frederick	274	\$522,547	\$1,907.11
Garrett	22	\$55,179.79	\$2,508.17
Harford	96	\$192,191.55	\$2,002.00
Howard	197	\$910,964.97	\$4,624.19
Kent	49	\$101,385.94	\$2,069.10
Montgomery	505	\$1,957,102.45	\$3,875.45
Prince George's	*	*	*
Queen Anne's	120	\$193,413	\$1,611.78
Somerset	36	\$66,014.18	\$1,833.73
St. Mary's	41	\$170,673	\$4,162.76
Talbot	41	\$56,282.22	\$1,372.74
Washington	50	\$93,355	\$1,867.10
Wicomico	216	\$454,287.34	\$2,103.19
Worcester	12	\$53,362.28	\$4,446.86

**Calvert and Prince George's Counties were unable to provide this information.*

5. Liens with No Private Purchaser and Obtained by the County.

11 counties reported obtaining less than 10 liens in their 2022 tax sale. Table 11a shows each county's total number of liens obtained by the county and their total and average lien amounts.

Table 11a. All Liens Obtained by the County - 2022 Tax Sales

County	Total parcels	Total lien amount	Average lien amount
Allegany	161	\$438,127.00	\$2,721.29
Anne Arundel	89	\$255,088.16	\$2,866.16
Baltimore City	2522	\$223,424,921.32	\$88,590.37
Baltimore County	245	\$1,946,862.92	\$7,946.38
Calvert	478	\$3,830,240.89	\$8,013.06
Caroline	None		
Carroll	1	\$2,368.12	\$2,368.12
Cecil	43	\$442,191.95	\$10,283.53
Charles	55	\$1,355,762.88	\$24,650.23
Dorchester	2	\$32,712.00	\$16,356.00
Frederick	6	\$102,515.00	\$17,085.83
Garrett	78	\$78,124.00	\$1,001.59
Harford	19	\$235,767.87	\$12,408.84
Howard	23	\$1,009,326.00	\$43,883.74
Kent	62	\$857,712.06	\$13,834.07
Montgomery	None		
Prince George's	190	\$4,286,043.22	\$22,558.12
Queen Anne's	2	\$382.10	\$191.05
Somerset	1	\$17,115.87	\$17,115.87
St. Mary's	6	\$314.00	\$52.00
Talbot	5	\$72,964.40	\$14,592.88
Washington	None		
Wicomico	80	\$2,136,567.83	\$26,707.10
Worcester	2	\$35,766.32	\$17,883.16

Only six of the 24 counties reported owner-occupied liens obtained by the county in their 2022 sales. There were 16 parcels held by the counties, and the average lien amount was \$18,161.22. Table 11b shows each county’s total number of owner-occupied liens sold and their total and average lien amounts.

Table 11b. Owner-occupied Liens Not Sold - Held by County - 2022 Tax Sales

County	Owner occupied parcels	Total lien amount	Average lien amount
Allegany	3	\$41,999	\$13,999.67
Calvert	*	*	*
Cecil	2	\$7,609.25	\$3,804.63
Charles	2	\$54,248.91	\$27,124.46
Kent	1	\$15,811.63	\$15,811.63
Talbot	1	\$13,694.52	\$13,694.52
Wicomico	7	\$241,727	\$34,532.43

* Calvert County was unable to provide this information.

REDEMPTIONS & FORECLOSURES

Redemption

As described earlier in this report, a property owner may pay off the sold lien against (“redeem”) their property at any time after a tax sale until a circuit court judge signs an order in favor of the lien purchaser foreclosing the property owner’s right to redeem. The longer it takes the owner to redeem the property, the higher the lien payoff amount becomes due to accruing taxes, interest and fees.

The liens sold in the 2022 tax sales may be redeemed up until a foreclosure judgment is entered, which may be months or years after the date of the tax sale. Three months after a foreclosure judgment, the property owner may file a motion to strike foreclosure if the lien purchaser has not yet transferred the title to the property into their name by paying their winning bid amount to the county and recording a deed. After a foreclosure is struck, the property owner may once again redeem by paying off the lien.

The data reported by the counties below is for properties redeemed by their owners during the period from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. These liens may have been sold at a tax sale in any prior year, but the owners paid off the liens during FY22.

1. *Properties Redeemed Prior to Foreclosure, FY22.*

Table 12a shows each county's total number of properties redeemed before foreclosure between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022, and their total and average lien amounts.

Table 12a. All Properties Redeemed before Foreclosure - FY22

County	Total parcels	Total Lien Amount	Average Lien Amount
Allegany	151	\$504,763.00	\$3,342.80
Anne Arundel	441	\$1,978,771.19	\$4,487.01
Baltimore City	9,277	\$222,085,714.01	\$23,939.39
Baltimore County	1,156	\$4,169,844.00	\$3,607.13
Calvert	17	\$94,266.89	\$5,545.11
Caroline	123	\$608,018.76	\$4,943.24
Carroll	67	\$263,298.57	\$3,929.83
Cecil	254	\$717,203.14	\$2,823.63
Charles	302	\$1,346,531.42	\$4,458.71
Dorchester	81	\$129,903.30	\$1,623.79
Frederick	362	\$981,185.91	\$2,710.46
Garrett	58	\$245,852.30	\$4,238.83
Harford	214	\$550,994.22	\$2,574.74
Howard	537	\$1,676,560.52	\$3,122.09
Kent	32	\$49,575.32	\$1,549.23
Montgomery	1,281	\$6,697,932.35	\$5,228.67
Prince George's	2,510	\$11,176,531.58	\$44,452.80
Queen Anne's	216	\$488,423.23	\$2,261.22
Somerset	154	\$315,048.92	\$2,045.77
St. Mary's	89	\$253,967.34	\$2,853.57
Talbot	76	\$253,163.58	\$3,331.10
Washington	181	\$473,896.01	\$2,618.21
Wicomico	353	\$775,615.43	\$2,197.21
Worcester	26	\$104,685.98	\$4,026.38

The total number of owner-occupied properties redeemed before foreclosure in FY22, not including Baltimore County, Calvert County, and Prince George’s Counties (see below), was 3,718. Table 12b shows each county’s total number of owner-occupied liens sold and their total and average lien amounts.

Table 12b. Owner-occupied Properties Redeemed Before Foreclosure - FY22

County	Owner Occupied Parcels	Total Lien Amount	Average Lien Amount
Allegany	36	\$126,924.00	\$3,525.67
Anne Arundel	243	\$904,455.40	\$3,722.04
Baltimore City	795	\$6,022,116.92	\$7,574.99
Baltimore County	*	*	*
Calvert	*	*	*
Caroline	53	\$375,732.59	\$7,089.29
Carroll	34	\$135,392.64	\$3,982.14
Cecil	117	\$262,784.42	\$2,246.02
Charles	74	\$230,460.01	\$3,114.32
Dorchester	6	\$16,890.00	\$2,815.00
Frederick	211	\$516,242.31	\$2,446.65
Garrett	20	\$59,069.19	\$2,953.46
Harford	74	\$156,152.12	\$2,110.16
Howard	187	\$846,837.16	\$4,528.54
Kent	14	\$28,232.27	\$2,016.59
Montgomery	699	\$3,175,420.40	\$4,542.80
Prince George's	*	*	*
Queen Anne's	141	\$253,482.40	\$1,797.75
Somerset	8	\$23,635.82	\$2,954.48
St. Mary's	34	\$143,212.20	\$4,212.12
Talbot	31	\$40,686.63	\$1,312.47
Washington	75	\$157,602.76	\$2,101.37
Wicomico	166	\$297,704.46	\$1,793.40
Worcester	4	\$19,301.56	\$4,825.39

** Baltimore County was unable to provide this information due to implementing a new IT system but will be able to provide this information again in future years. Calvert and Prince George’s Counties were unable to provide this information.*

Foreclosures

As described earlier in this report, a foreclosure is a court judgment that forecloses the property owner’s right to “redeem” (pay off their sold lien). In the 23 counties, lien purchasers may file a motion to foreclose as soon as six months after the tax sale date and up until two years after the tax sale date. For owner-occupied properties in Baltimore City, the lien purchaser cannot file a motion to foreclose until at least nine months after the tax sale date.

Two years after the tax sale date, if a lien purchaser fails to file a motion to foreclose, they lose their right to do so, and they forfeit any funds paid to the local jurisdiction. The homeowner may still redeem the property by paying off the county’s remaining lien amount. If the lien continues to remain unpaid, the county may sell the lien again in its next tax sale.

Three months after a foreclosure order has been signed, if the lien purchaser has not transferred title to their name by paying their bid amount to the county and recording a deed, the homeowner may file a motion to strike foreclosure in circuit court and regain their right to redeem and clear their title. The data reported below is for properties whose owners’ right to redeem was foreclosed during the period from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022. These liens may have been sold at tax sale in any prior year, but the foreclosure was finalized during FY22.

2. Properties Subject to Foreclosure by the County.

Four counties reported properties foreclosed by the county in FY22. Table 13a shows the total number of properties foreclosed by the county, and their total and average lien amounts.

Table 13a. All Properties Foreclosed by the County – FY22

County	Total Parcels	Total Lien Amount	Average Lien Amount
Baltimore City	23	\$157,655.90	\$6,854.60
Calvert	*	*	*
Dorchester	2	\$24,880.95	\$12,440.48
Prince George's	2	\$124,698.65	\$62,349.33
Somerset	18	\$219,575.69	\$12,198.65

**Calvert County was unable to provide this information.*

Baltimore City was the only jurisdiction that reported any owner-occupied properties foreclosed on by the county in FY22. Table 13b shows each county’s total number of owner-occupied liens foreclosed by the county and their total and average lien amounts.

Table 13b. Owner Occupied Foreclosed by the County – FY22

County	Parcels owner-occupied	Total lien amount	Average lien amount
Baltimore City	3	\$30,124.13	\$10,041.38
Calvert	*	*	*

**Calvert County was unable to provide this information.*

3. Foreclosed by a Private Holder of a Tax Lien Certificate, FY22.

Charles and Wicomico Counties reported no foreclosures by private lien holders. Table 14a shows each county's total number of properties foreclosed by a private holder and their total and average lien amounts.

Table 14a. All Properties Foreclosed by a Private Lien Holder – FY22

County	Total Parcels	Total Lien Amount	Average Lien Amount
Allegany	27	\$111,487.00	\$4,129.15
Anne Arundel	25	\$54,344.44	\$2,173.78
Baltimore City	259	\$916,018.32	\$3,536.75
Baltimore County	8	\$78,652.15	\$9,831.52
Calvert	*	*	*
Caroline	6	\$18,140.62	\$3,023.44
Carroll	2	\$4,549.43	\$2,274.72
Cecil	6	\$17,712.34	\$2,952.06
Charles	None		
Dorchester	8	\$21,257.85	\$2,657.23
Frederick	17	\$203,489.89	\$11,969.99
Garrett	6	\$13,674.61	\$2,279.10
Harford	10	\$24,876.05	\$2,487.61
Howard	3	\$53,266.93	\$17,755.64
Kent	25	\$79,328.08	\$3,173.13
Montgomery	4	\$12,102.44	\$3,025.61
Prince George's	128	\$831,897.78	\$6,499.20
Queen Anne's	8	\$12,268.08	\$1,533.51
Somerset	31	\$76,333.32	\$2,462.37
St. Mary's	7	\$8,366.32	\$1,195.19
Talbot	1	\$299.93	\$299.93
Washington	11	\$41,874.25	\$3,806.75
Wicomico	None		
Worcester	18	\$56,551.33	\$3,141.74

* Calvert County was unable to provide this information.

Anne Arundel, Carroll, Charles, Garrett, Howard, Queen Anne’s, St. Mary’s, and Wicomico Counties reported no owner-occupied foreclosures by private lien holders. Table 14b shows each county’s total number of owner-occupied foreclosures and their total and average lien amounts.

Table 14b. Owner-occupied Foreclosed by a Private Lien Holder – FY22

County	Owner Occupied Parcels	Total Lien Amount	Average Lien Amount
Allegany	11	\$50,803.00	\$4,618.45
Baltimore City	65	\$252,548.95	\$3,885.37
Baltimore County	1	\$2,824.02	\$2,824.02
Calvert	*	*	*
Caroline	1	\$2,660.94	\$2,660.94
Cecil	1	\$3,054.87	\$3,054.87
Dorchester	1	\$2,135.31	\$2,135.31
Frederick	4	\$17,078.04	\$4,269.51
Harford	1	\$3,161.35	\$3,161.35
Kent	7	\$29,514.58	\$4,216.37
Montgomery	3	\$11,622.57	\$3,874.19
Prince George's	*	*	*
Somerset	4	\$141,789.82	\$32,375.00
Talbot	1	\$299.93	\$299.93
Washington	2	\$17,340.19	\$8,670.10
Worcester	6	\$25,126.71	\$4,187.79

* Calvert and Prince George’s Counties were unable to provide this information.