



North Carolina Department of Revenue

Roy Cooper
Governor

Ronald G. Penny
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

TO: Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations Co-Chairs:
Honorable Phil Berger Honorable Tim Moore
President Pro Tempore Speaker of the House

Senate Committee on Finance:
Senator Paul Newton, Chair
Senator Bill Rabon, Chair
Senator Warren Daniel, Chair

House Committee on Finance:
Representative Julia Howard, Senior Chair
Representative Mitchell Setzer, Senior Chair
Representative John Szoka, Senior Chair
Representative John Bradford, Senior Chair
Representative Keith Kidwell, Chair
Representative Michael Wray, Chair

FROM: Ronald G. Penny
Secretary of Revenue

DATE: February 1, 2021

SUBJECT: Tax Compliance Initiatives and Results, July 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020
Revenue Projections, July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

This semi-annual report to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations and to the Finance Committees is prepared pursuant to G.S. 105-256(a)(8). This report reflects a collaborative effort among certain divisions within the N.C. Department of Revenue (NCDOR).

The NCDOR administers the tax laws, determining taxes due to the State, collecting delinquent taxes, and providing tax education and service to citizens of the State, in an impartial, consistent, secure, and efficient manner. The NCDOR has implemented various initiatives designed to address non-compliance and to recapture lost General Fund revenue. Results of each initiative are tracked to ensure proper allocation of tax compliance personnel. The following provides a brief description of the data included in exhibits 1-6, which are attached.

Exhibit 1 briefly describes many, but not all NCDOR initiatives designed to identify noncompliance, recapture lost General Fund revenue and increase voluntary compliance.

Exhibit 2 reflects revenue projections from the collaborative efforts noted in this report. These revenue projections are estimates by tax type and are presented for the fiscal year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

Exhibit 3 lists some of the key initiatives that are part of the Department's long-term collection plan for the fiscal year.

Exhibit 4 reflects total collections and refund savings for Tax Compliance for the period July 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020.

Exhibit 5 provides the results of our collaborative collection efforts July 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020. The exhibit provides information regarding the age and collection of assessments for the period.

Exhibit 6 reflects collections by tax type from accounts receivable and proposed assessments for the period July 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020.

Exhibit 7 is a summary, for the period July 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020 on the use of the proceeds of the 20% collection assistance fee imposed by G.S. 105-243.1

Exhibit 1 – Department’s Existing Initiatives

4% ITIN (Individual Taxpayer Identification Number) **Withholding** - 4% ITIN W/H is an initiative based on the statute requiring 4% withholding on payments to ITIN holders, subject to certain provisions. Non-compliance has been identified in this area. The Department receives certain Form 1099 payment information from the IRS and then, by comparing this data to Departmental records, the Department identifies possible instances of underreporting for potential audit.

Amended Returns - Individual Income -- This initiative involves the review of all individual amended returns, whether filed electronically or via paper. The amended returns are audited based on the non-compliance issue identified during the review process.

Automated Attachments-- This initiative establishes an automated matching process and issues an attachment/garnishment based on best available levy source.

Automated Installment Agreements – The Department works with taxpayers to establish installment payment agreements to repay past-due tax debts.

Bankruptcy Processing – The Bankruptcy Unit within our Collection Division processes and maintains all aspects of cases involving taxpayers who have filed for protection under the US Bankruptcy Code.

Bilingual Team - The Department launched a team dedicated to bilingual issues in mid-2006 and has been reviewing cases since 2003. This team reviews documents written in a foreign language, and arranges to speak with taxpayers whose native language is not English. Some of the non-compliance issues that recur include: taxpayers claiming dependents and exemptions for family living in another country; taxpayers claiming a false number of dependents and a wrong filing status; taxpayers filing returns with false names, ITIN numbers, and Social Security numbers; and taxpayers failing to report all income.

Business Non-Filer Initiative – Due to the large number of delinquent Sales & Use tax returns, an initiative has begun that matches 1099k information for those taxpayers that are delinquent. Based on certain criteria, assessments are made from this information, or the information is provided to the Exams Division for possible audit. Full audits are then conducted.

CIBA (Cash Intensive Business Audits) – As a result of non-compliance in cash intensive businesses, the Examination Division created the Cash Intensive Business Audit team. This team identifies and conducts complex audits of cash intensive businesses, audits which generally involve indirect audit methods to reconstruct records. Team members also serve as resources for other staff that may be engaged in audits of businesses of a similar nature.

CP2000 Adjustments - The Department of Revenue receives CP2000 tapes from the Internal Revenue Service under the terms of a data sharing agreement. Information on the CP2000 tapes represents the results from an IRS match of information returns such as forms W-2 and 1099 that are filed by employers, banks, businesses and other payers. This information is matched against individual income tax returns. An automatic adjustment is made to the taxpayer’s account to create an assessment for the amount of tax, penalty and interest due.

Consumer Use Tax – Many North Carolina residents fail to remit and pay the proper use tax on purchases of tangible personal property obtained from vendors outside the state. The NCDOR utilizes a number of matching data sources to identify these purchases. Individual taxpayers are contacted for the recapture of this revenue.

Convenience Stores - The Examination Division has determined non-compliance within this cash intensive business classification. These audits are generally complex and require indirect audit methods. Multiple data sources and data analytics aid in the identification of non-compliance.

Corporate Income and Franchise Taxes: Non-Filers – This examination initiative identifies non-filers from ITAS and external data sources, including both state and federal agency sources.

Criminal Procedures – Regionally based revenue officers work with local district attorneys to develop and prosecute misdemeanor cases of willful failure to file or pay state taxes.

Desk Audits – Individual Income Tax Groups - The Central Exam Section establishes audit selection criteria for individual income tax audits.

Discovery/Special Projects - The individual income tax audit program administered by the Discovery/Special Projects group utilizes report criteria, analytic and query tools, predefined rules for scoring returns and data received from Employment Security Commission and NC3. The initiative focuses on audit selection, fraud detection, the prevention of identity theft, and the identification of fraudulent preparer cases. Fictitious returns are identified and referred to the Criminal Investigations Division to determine criminal or civil disposition.

Exhibit 1 – Department’s Existing Initiatives (Cont.)

Federal Refund Offsets – The NCDOR sends State debt information to the Internal Revenue Service, which then offsets any federal tax refunds due for repayment of state tax debts.

FIRM - The Financial Institution Record Matching (FIRM) process was implemented in 2011. The process facilitates our Automated Attachment (AA) process. The Department of Revenue recently expanded the FIRM process by hiring a 3rd party vendor to manage a data exchange with all financial institutions that have nexus in North Carolina.

Flow through Audit Group - The Flowthrough Audit Group audits partnerships, S-Corporations, individuals and Corporations receiving income from a flow through entity. The team reviews and analyzes tax returns filed by flow through entities to identify areas of non-compliance. In addition, the team utilizes queries against taxpayer historical data as a methodology to identify potential audit leads.

Fraudulent Preparer - Fraudulent Preparers are paid tax preparers that are identified in conjunction with the Fraudulent Preparer Returns Initiative. The preparer cases are referred to the Criminal Investigation Section for possible prosecution. At the conclusion of the investigation by CI or prosecution of the “paid preparer,” the office may conduct an examination of the paid preparer's returns, requesting that specific documentation to substantiate all deductions/expenses be furnished at the established examination appointment.

Fraudulent Preparer Return – These are returns that have been completed by a “paid tax preparer” that contain false or fictitious itemized deductions and/or Schedule C business losses. At the conclusion of the investigation by CI or prosecution of the “paid preparer,” the individual income tax returns of the clients of the “paid preparer” are referred for examination.

IMF/IRTF AGI (Adjusted Gross Income) Match - The Department of Revenue receives the Individual Master File (IMF) and the Individual Returns Transaction File (IRTF) tape from the Internal Revenue Service each year under the Federal/State IRS Data Exchange Program. This contains Federal tax records for taxpayers with a North Carolina address. With this data, the Central Exam Section is able to compare the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) per the IMF master file to the AGI shown on the North Carolina individual income tax return. The system creates an automatic assessment if the AGI per the IMF is greater than the AGI per the North Carolina return.

Individual Income - Schedule C – Specific criteria is used to identify potential individual income tax returns that understate gross business income and/or overstate business expenses on the Schedule C.

Information Reporting - The Department identified non-compliance within the bar and restaurant business classifications. The new reporting requirements for the ABC Boards and alcohol distributors to the Department will provide in valuable information related to this, and other initiatives.

Income Shifting and Transfer Pricing – This group will be responsible for assisting auditors in reviewing intercompany transactions. Many of these intercompany transactions have been used by corporations to minimize their North Carolina income taxes. The group will employ a transfer pricing database to assist in the determination of fair market value of intercompany transactions.

Internet Retailers – This Examination initiative is designed to identify internet retailers who have not previously registered or filed returns with the State and bring them into compliance.

Interstate Examination Section Audit Initiatives - The Interstate Examination Section is primarily tasked with conducting field examinations of taxpayers located throughout the United States. Many of these examinations are conducted from satellite offices located in the major metropolitan areas of the U.S. These examinations often involve the nation’s largest taxpayers and the most complex issues. These include Fortune 500 audits and Amended Returns/Refund Claims.

IRMF (Individual Return Master File) Non-Filer Assessment - The Department of Revenue receives IRMF file through the Internal Revenue Service’s Data Exchange Program for taxpayers that have an income source whereby the payee or payer resided in North Carolina. Using this extract, the Department identifies taxpayers who have a North Carolina income source record but have not filed a North Carolina tax return. The NC-3 initiative has been incorporated into the IRMF initiative. The Department reconciles the employer provided W-2’s to verify employees filed an individual income tax return. The IRMF data is used in conjunction with the NC-3 and Federal/State data to ensure all income sources are included in the Notice to File a Return sent to delinquent taxpayers.

IRTF (Individual Return Transaction file) Non-Filer Assessment - The NCDOR receives information through the Internal Revenue Service’s Data Exchange Program for taxpayers who filed a federal income tax return with a North Carolina address. The Individual Returns Transaction File (IRTF) contains all the fields currently transcribed from Forms 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ and their accompanying forms and schedules. IRTF information is obtained from the tax return as originally filed by the taxpayer.

Jeopardy Assessments – When the Department determines that collection of an account is in jeopardy, the law allows the Department to assess non-filed periods and immediately begin the collection process. This action is used primarily to collect business trust taxes.

Exhibit 1 – Department’s Existing Initiatives (Cont.)

Large Corporate Cases/Income Shifting – This initiative addresses a number of tax avoidance techniques utilized by corporations to shift net income from taxation by this state through inter-company transactions within a consolidated group or to create expenses between wholly-owned subsidiaries to reduce net income taxable in this state.

Levy Officer Program – NC Gen. Stat. §105-242(b) gives the Department the authority to seize and sell personal property. Specially trained revenue officers perform this function for the Department.

MeF Queries – Specific criteria are used to query electronically filed individual income tax returns to identify fraudulent preparers, fictitious, and abusive tax returns. Identified tax returns are selected for potential audit candidates.

Motor Fuels - Motor Fuels auditors and support staff moved into the Examination Division on May 1, 2011. These auditors provide audit coverage across North Carolina and maintain a presence in all service center locations. Primary initiatives include International Fuel Tax Agreement, International Registration Plan and various Motor Fuels tax audit initiatives. The Motor Fuels Investigative unit moved into the Examination Division-Motor Fuels Section in May 1, 2019. They are located in 6 service center locations. Primary initiatives include dyed diesel and operating authority inspections, special enforcement operations, BOL inspections and various motor fuel investigations.

MSA Team (Master Settlement Agreement) - The Department of Revenue is tasked with tabulating and reporting the annual sales of certain cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco products to the Attorney General’s office. Because the escrow payments required of certain companies under the Master Settlement Agreement are calculated based on this information, it is crucial that it be as accurate as possible. Field and desk audits of tobacco manufacturers, distributors, wholesale and retail dealers are performed to help ensure the accuracy of this reporting, as well as to increase compliance with tobacco excise tax requirements. This audit work of this dedicated team adds to N.C.’s due diligence and protection of the MSA as required by the Agreement.

Non-File Cross Tax Type Match – The Department’s Integrated Tax Administration System (ITAS) allows the Examination Division to match taxpayer information against the system to determine if the taxpayer is properly registered for all appropriate tax schedule(s).

Non-Resident Real Estate Conveyances – Non-resident individual income tax non-filers are identified from Form 1099NRS or electronically through County register of deeds offices. Non-residents are required to file a North Carolina Income tax return and report any income that is derived from North Carolina sources, including income that is attributable to the ownership in real property located in this state.

Offer-In-Compromise – NC Gen. Stat. §105-237.1 provides authority to the Secretary to settle tax debt for an amount less than the full amount due in certain limited situations, generally involving financial hardship.

On-Line Notice Payments – The Department provides a system that permits taxpayers to pay tax bills on-line using credit cards or ACH bank drafts.

POS Initiative – Non-compliance has been identified via the modification of sales data in Point of Sale systems. The intent is to identify taxpayers that may have artificially reduced their Sales Tax liability by manipulating their POS system’s software and reports. Suppression may occur manually or programmatically.

Professional Associations - Professional Associations is a revenue generation project whereby queries are run in the ITAS system filtered by various NAICS codes and other information such as gross receipts, total assets, and whether or not the taxpayer is registered for Sales & Use Tax. The intent is to identify these specific types of business organizations to determine possible non-compliance issues.

Revenue Agent Reports (RAR) – Through the Federal Data Exchange Program, the Internal Revenue Service furnishes to the NCDOR copies of federal audit reports conducted on individuals and corporations. This information is received pursuant to Internal Revenue Code Section 6103(d) and results in subsequent changes to North Carolina tax liability.

Responsible Corporate Officers – Responsibility for certain business taxes owed by businesses can be transferred to responsible corporate officers and partners of limited liability companies. This process is used frequently to collect past due business trust taxes such as sales or withholding tax.

Returned Mail Automation-- This collections initiative seeks to increase our efficiency in resolving returned mail. Tools and process changes will reduce the time needed to locate a better address for the taxpayer and reinitiate contact, either by mail or other channels.

S-Corporations - The S-Corporations initiative is a revenue generation project whereby queries are run against S-Corporations in the ITAS system filtered by information such as gross receipts, total assets, and whether or not the taxpayer is registered for Sales & Use Tax. The intent is to identify S-Corporations to determine possible non-compliance issues.

Exhibit 1 – Department’s Existing Initiatives (Cont.)

Specialty/Phone Cards - Some retailers direct their sales toward certain demographics. These oftentimes sell a multitude of items, similar to that of a more typical convenience store. In addition they may sell specialty food items, prepared foods, and items such as phone cards. These cards allow the purchaser to make long-distance and international calls. The cards are taxable for sales tax purposes, but there is a large amount of non-compliance involved as it appears sellers do not understand the cards are taxable. In addition, there is misunderstanding as to what items qualify for the reduced food tax rate.

Tax Credits – The focus of this examination initiative involves the eligibility and proper calculation of tax credits for individuals and corporations.

Vapor – This initiative looks at compliance of a new Excise tax of product sold typically in 'vapor shops'. These retailers often sell other tobacco products and assorted paraphernalia. Audits for Excise, Sales, and Income taxes are performed.

Vendor Garnishment -- This effort establishes a matching process where State agency payments made to vendors are matched against tax debts automatically, and payments are offset if a tax liability is owed to the State.

Voluntary Disclosure Program- This initiative is designed to promote compliance among taxpayers, who have not previously registered or filed a return with the Department and who want to voluntarily discharge a tax liability.

Withholding NC-3 Employer Under Reporter - The Withholding tax group reviews withholding NC-3 returns (yearly reconciliation) that are in suspense. After reviewing the account, they perform line item adjustments to generate assessments or refunds.

Withholding NC-5Q Reconciliation - The Withholding tax group reviews NC-5Qs that are underpaid and/or no payment is posted to the account period(s). The NC-5Q is an information quarterly reconciliation return for accelerated withholding taxpayers. After a review and analysis of the account periods by Information Processing Technicians, office audit cases are set up and line item adjustments are performed to generate assessments or refunds for taxpayers in appropriate cases.

Inflated Withholding – The initiative identifies individual taxpayers that overstated the amount the NC tax withheld or understated the wages claimed on their individual income tax return compared to the amount reported by the employer.

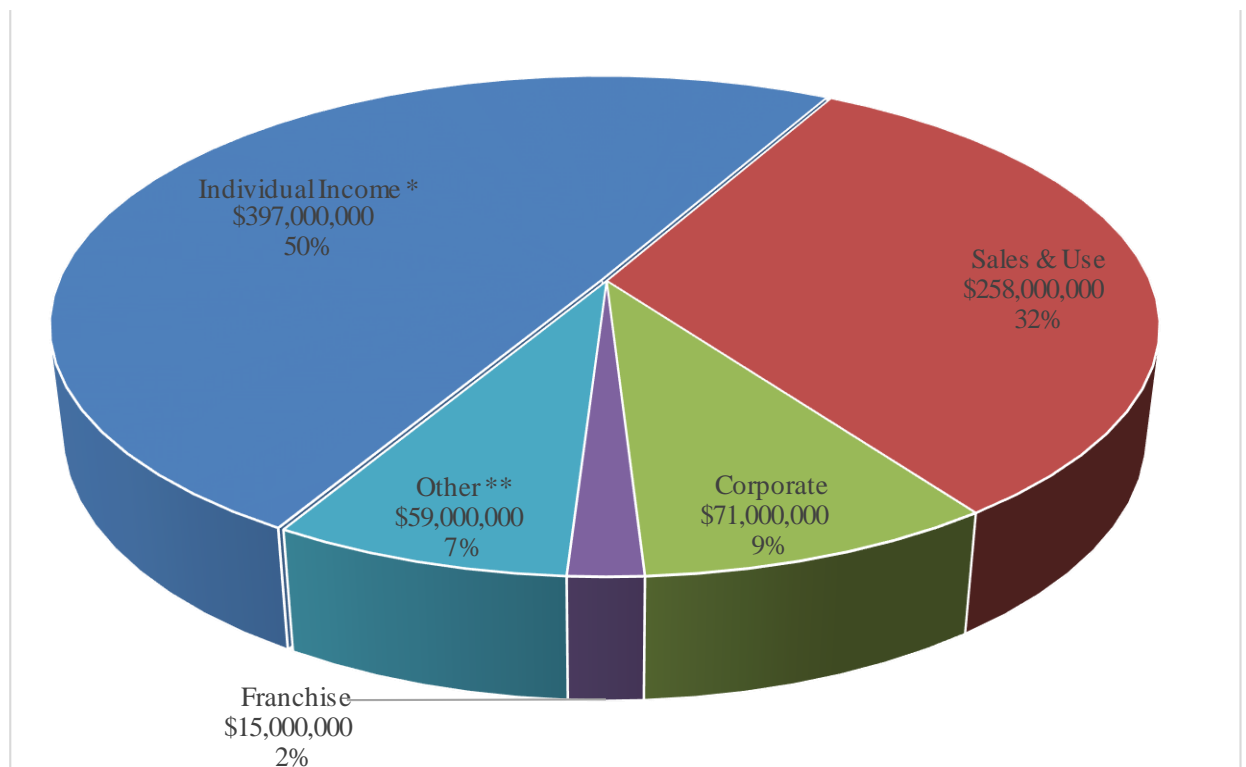
Under Reporter/Non-filer – The initiative identifies employers that have either under reported the amount of NC Income tax withheld or have withheld tax from employees and failed to register, file and remit income tax withheld.

**Exhibit 2 - Revenue Projections by Tax Type
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021**

Tax Type	Goal
Individual Income *	397,000,000
Sales & Use	258,000,000
Corporate	71,000,000
Franchise	15,000,000
Other **	59,000,000
TOTAL	\$ 800,000,000

* Individual Income includes debts owed by businesses for employee withholding taxes held but not paid.

** The category "Other" includes License and Excise Taxes, Insurance Premium Tax, Machinery Equipment, 911 Service Charge, Gift/Inheritance and other Tobacco Products



* Individual Income includes: individual income taxes, employer withholding taxes and amounts due on partnership returns. ** Other includes: license and excise taxes, insurance premium tax, estate/gift taxes, unauthorized substance, and motor fuels.

Exhibit 3 - Long-Term Collection Plan

Long Term Collection Plan

- **Enhanced Case Management Tools** — A key component of the Department’s collection strategy are enhanced tools for managing the collection process. Risk scoring of accounts and an enhanced work-flow engine will enable the Department to ensure the highest possible return on investment from the collection process.
- **Improved Information Exchange** — Information is the life-blood of the collection process. The Department continuously looks for new methods of securing and utilizing data to aid in locating debtor taxpayers and assets that may be subject to levy.
- **Performance Measures** — The Department continues to track performance of the collection program through various performance measures. Collections are tracked at the division, office and individual collector level. The data from this tracking effort is used to devise strategies for collection and to allocate resources in an effective manner.
- **Notice to File for Business Non-filers** — The Department is currently developing a combined multi-pronged Examination/Collection Division initiative. This initiative will utilize multiple data sources including recently enacted legislation regarding information reporting requirements. One component of the initiative will utilize data analytics to determine potential tax liability and automate the process for submitting a Notice to File a business return for identified taxpayers. This process will expedite the assessment and collection process as well as increase voluntary compliance as a result of data sources made available through information reporting.

Exhibit 4 – Total Tax Compliance Collections

July 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020

Collections	
Notice of Collection - Accounts Receivable	\$296,791,214
Notice of Proposed Assessment	\$76,763,733
Collections from Delinquent Returns	\$33,227,244
Total Tax Compliance Collections	\$406,782,191

**Exhibit 5 –Collections from Accounts Receivable
And Proposed Assessments
July 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020**

Age of Assessments	20% Fee Warning	Other DOR Collection	Totals
0-30 days	-	69,306,131	69,306,131
31-60 days	-	55,637,317	55,637,317
61-90 days	2,270,483	27,056,399	29,326,882
91-120 days	5,560,038	4,167,501	9,727,539
121-180 days	2,706,018	5,939,058	8,645,076
181-365 days	3,804,674	29,278,308	33,082,983
366-730 days	5,048,531	36,676,035	41,724,566
Older than 730 days	1,642,593	47,698,664	49,341,258
Totals	\$ 21,032,337	\$ 275,759,414	\$ 296,791,750

Collections From Accounts Receivable **\$ 296,791,750**

Collections From Proposed Assessments 109,990,441

Collections from Accounts Receivable and Proposed Assessments **\$ 406,782,191**

**Exhibit 6
Collections by Tax Type
From Accounts Receivable and Proposed Assessments
July 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020**

Tax Type	Jul 2020	Aug 2020	Sep 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Total
Individual Income *	30,598,739	31,674,783	34,298,251	78,978,525	51,869,687	50,289,318	277,709,302
Sales & Use	9,343,796	9,341,184	10,437,403	16,026,515	9,829,904	11,163,599	66,142,402
Corporate	11,808,695	(6,428,433)	2,660,743	17,014,511	7,601,591	6,495,360	39,152,467
Franchise	825,905	2,388,016	2,614,330	8,700,428	1,754,051	1,824,226	18,106,955
Other **	379,839	95,620	180,052	343,237	919,067	3,753,249	5,671,064
TOTAL	52,956,973	37,071,170	50,190,778	121,063,217	71,974,300	73,525,753	406,782,191

* Individual Income includes debts owed by businesses for employee withholding taxes held but not paid.

** The category "Other" includes License and Excise Taxes, Insurance Premium Tax, Machinery Equipment, and 911 Service Charge.

Exhibit 7 – Use of Proceeds of 20% Collection Fee**North Carolina Department of Revenue****20% Collection Assistance Fee Expenditures Related to Collection of Overdue Tax Debts**

(NC General Statute 105-256)

	FY 2020 - 21 July '20 - December '20	TOTAL
14700/1661 - Project Collect Tax		
Salaries and Benefits (336.807 Positions)	\$ 13,966,275	
Contractual Services	486,508	
Rent/Leases	648,455	
Maintenance	-	
Travel	92,558	
Communication and Data Processing	104,268	
Supplies	13,961	
Equipment (Office, Hardware and Software)	-	
Legal Expenses	17,410	
Other Administrative Expenses	42,988	\$ 15,372,423
14700/1662 - Taxpayer Call Center		
Salaries and Benefits (154.93 Positions)	\$ 4,042,172	
Contractual Services	22,417	
Utility/Energy Services	14,483	
Maintenance	389	
Rent/Leases	175,757	
Travel	9,540	
Communication and Data Processing	261,555	
Supplies	6,877	
Equipment (Office, Hardware and Software)	-	
Other Administrative Expenses	4,219	4,537,410

Grand Total**\$ 19,909,833**Financial Services
Jan 17, 2021