

SUCCESS STORY

“RPCS was one of the major factors by which we were able to accomplish this level of recovery quickly and effectively.”

GARY SABEAN

Deputy Treasurer, Arlington County Treasury Office

State of Virginia, Arlington County Office of the Treasurer

- Arlington is an urban county of approximately 26 square miles located directly across the Potomac River from Washington DC with an estimated population of 200,226 and an annual budget approaching \$800,000,000.
- The Treasurer's Office is comprised of 64 staff members; 24 of whom work directly in the Compliance Division managing collections needs for the County.
- The Treasurer's Office collected over \$27 million in delinquent taxes and fees during the past fiscal year.

Results At-A-Glance

- ✓ County tax delinquency rate decreased from 9.4% to 1.1% over the past 22 years due to three factors: change in laws, increase in staffing and use of tools such as RPCS. This year, it is expected to be lowered to less than 1.0%.
- ✓ RPCS has introduced new ways for collectors to work faster and smarter, cut costs and eliminate redundancy.
- ✓ As part of this effort, the Treasurer's Office has also collected \$2.7 million out of the \$3.6 million debt owed assigned by other county departments in the last three years.

Challenge: The Demise of Card Boxes and Green Bar Paper

Arlington County today boasts the lowest tax delinquency rate in its history. Change in laws to give government more control over debts owed, increase in collection department staffing and use of new tools have all contributed to the overall improvement in revenue recovery. However, more than a decade ago, the county was in a different situation altogether.

Back in 1983, Arlington County had no collection process in place. No staff, no technology or tools and no funding to do anything about pursuing debtors. When Frank O'Leary was elected as the new treasurer in 1983, he promised that it was time for a change. Once treasurer, he immediately developed the "Tax Buster" program. This was the beginning of the Compliance Division.



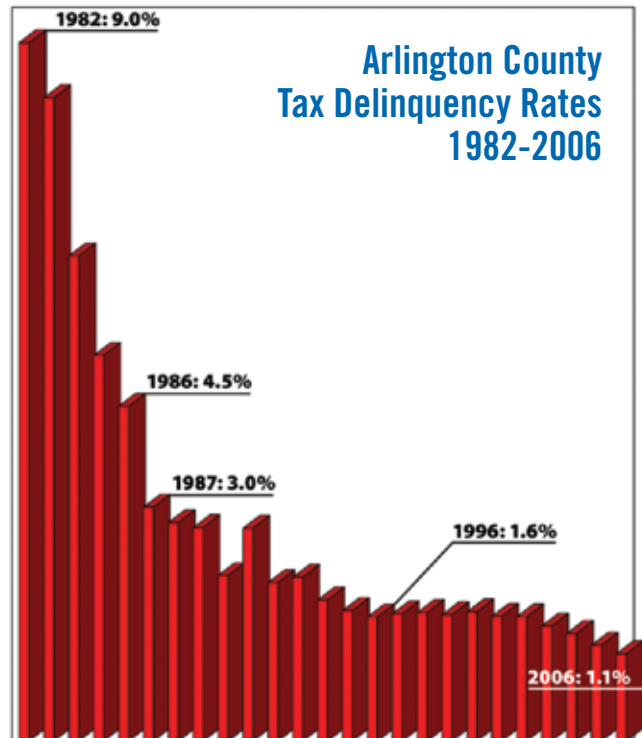
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“At the start, Frank O’Leary had limited staffing and tools but an abundance of ideas and energy,” said Gary Sabean, Deputy Treasurer, Arlington County Treasury Office. “During that time our mechanism for tracking and filing debtor accounts were notes written on green bar paper stuffed in cardboard boxes. Information was scattered and outdated, and we had no debtor history or current status of accounts. It was completely inefficient. We needed to find a solution that would allow us to organize our work, and then help us strategize and prioritize accounts.”

Solution: County Gets Invaluable Benefits from RevQ’s RPCS

Treasurer O’Leary discovered that the state of Maryland was achieving positive results with software from RevQ for check generation and refunds. They decided to visit RevQ to learn more about their offerings, and in 1996, implemented RPCS. A tool specifically tailored for government use, RPCS streamlines and organizes methods of collecting outstanding accounts, prioritizing the right accounts to work, automating payment plans, and automatically sending follow-up notices at pre-determined intervals among other activities.

“RPCS has been invaluable. The memo feature allows collectors to write detailed notes and other information to keep an ongoing log or history of the debtor. If the debtor claims they never saw a delinquent notice, the collector would be able to pull up the notes and see right away the account history and each transaction, when letters were sent, if the notice was returned, the last phone conversation and with whom and when,” notes Sabean. “Having this type of information at our fingertips makes collectors work smarter and faster, and debtors feel that they can no longer hide.”



The customization and prioritization functionalities allow collectors to easily sort hundreds of cases based on the type of accounts, type of fees, dates, and so on. In addition, features such as Notice Series allows collectors to customize and upload specific letters to be automatically sent out at different intervals. Return mail can be coded within RPCS to initiate skip tracing. Credit reports are attached to the debtor account, thereby eliminating the need for a paper printout of the report.

Results: County Surpasses Original Goal; Collects \$27 million

Managing collections for 15 county departments, the debt cases assigned to the Compliance Division range from overdue personal property tax, business license tax, meals tax, real estate tax, ambulance bills, housing grants, false alarms fees, utility bills

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and food stamps and a wide range of Department of Human service charges, and more.

RPCS enables collectors to pull and packet all various accounts together so that at any time, they can see in one glance the entire debt history of that particular person—regardless of when the debt was incurred, what it’s for and the amount due. In the case that the debtor is taken to court, having one document with all miscellaneous owed debt information outlined—whether it’s a delinquent personal property tax payment, an overdue hospital invoice or a late utility payment—can be a useful tool because the debt can be addressed on one motion for judgment. Otherwise, the debtor would be called to court six times for debt owed to six different departments which can cost time, resources and money.

“RPCS is one of the most valuable tools we have in compliance, along with good personnel and support of management. However, without RPCS, I could not even imagine the cases that would have been missed. In the last three years, we’ve collected over 73% of the debt owed from the 15 departments that have assigned account to us. We’ve collected a total of over \$27 million in 2006. With RPCS we are now able to monitor progress and work levels of each collector so we know how many cases are being reviewed or resolved at any given time and assess productivity of the department. The deployment of RPCS has been able to keep us moving ahead and continue the path to increased recovery and improved collections,” said Sabean.



About RevQ

RevQ is part of the Columbia Ultimate family of companies, providing industry leading software and consulting services to improve collections for the public sector. Leveraging innovative collections tools, techniques and technologies, the RevQ staff provides over 90 years of collective government experience and unsurpassed expertise in delivering compliance improvement and revenue results, which are critical to today’s Courts, Taxation and other public sector entities.

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