

SENIORS MUST APPLY FOR THE SENIOR FREEZE EXEMPTION;
MOST OTHER PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS RENEWED AUTOMATICALLY

Contact: Ali ElSaffar, Oak Park Township Assessor
(708) 383-8005

Annual renewal applications for the Senior Freeze, one of two property tax exemptions for eligible homeowners who are at least sixty-five years old, were mailed in early March and should be filed by April 5. Savings from the Freeze and other tax exemptions will appear on the second installment of 2023 tax bills, which will be mailed in the summer or fall of 2024. Oak Park Township Assessor Ali ElSaffar reminds residents that his office is available to help with the completion and filing of the Freeze and all other exemption applications.

The Freeze must be renewed annually because eligibility is based on income, which can vary from year to year. During the pandemic, however, the annual renewal requirement for the Freeze was waived. The renewal requirement has since been reinstated.

Because of the income requirements, some seniors will not be eligible for the Senior Freeze. But all senior homeowners should be eligible for the Senior Citizen Exemption. Eligibility requirements for these exemptions are below:

- 1) The ***Senior Citizen Exemption***, available to all seniors regardless of income, reduces Oak Park property taxes by about \$1,000. It is available for residential properties if an owner lived in the property in 2023 and was born in 1958 or earlier. If the property received the Senior Exemption last year, it should be automatically renewed unless the property was recently sold.
- 2) The ***Senior Freeze*** provides additional savings if the combined income of all members of the senior's household is \$65,000 or less, and if the senior has been an owner-occupant of the property since January 1, 2022. Seniors should complete and file the Freeze application by April 5.

New Senior Citizens. Homeowners who were born in 1958 turned sixty-five in 2023, and thus are likely to be eligible for the senior exemptions for the first time. "Taxpayers who recently turned sixty-five may not receive senior application forms in the mail," Assessor ElSaffar said. "I encourage such individuals to call my office for information about the senior exemptions. Information is also available on the Cook County Assessor's web site."

Other Exemptions. The Homeowner Exemption, available to all owner-occupied homes regardless of the owner's age, will be automatically renewed for those who received it last year, as will recipients of the Exemption for People with Disabilities. It should be noted, however, that those who purchased their homes in 2022 will have to apply this year for the 2023 Homeowner Exemption and any other exemptions for which they are eligible.

Residents with questions about property tax exemptions should feel free to call the Oak Park Township Assessor's office for assistance.

Release Date: March 5, 2024