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Assessor Kaegi Extends Deadline for Senior Exemptions Due to Recent Inclement Weather

CHICAGO – Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi announced today that his office has extended the deadline for the Senior Citizen and Senior Freeze Exemption applications for Tax Year 2018. The original deadline date was February 6th and **the deadline has been extended to Friday, February 15th, 2019.**

Over 300,000 applications were mailed in January to seniors who received the exemptions last year. The Senior Exemption application is part of a booklet mailed to eligible seniors. The booklet also contains the separate, income-based Senior Freeze Exemption application. All exemptions will appear on second-installment property tax bills mailed this summer.

“With the recent frigid temperatures, our office was concerned that some seniors would not get their applications returned on time,” Assessor Kaegi explained. “We have extended the application deadline to ensure that as many eligible seniors as possible receive these important, money-saving deductions on their bills.”

As a reminder, any exemptions filed for the 2018 tax year will appear on the 2nd installment bill which will be mailed in July of 2019.

Under Illinois law, seniors must reapply annually for both the Senior and Senior Freeze Exemptions in order to continue to receive the deductions.

To qualify for the **Senior Citizen Exemption** for tax year 2018, a taxpayer must have:

- been born prior to or in the year 1953
- owned the property during 2018 or have a lease or contract for 2018 which makes them responsible for the real estate taxes
- used the property as his or her principal place of residence in 2018

Please Note: Beginning last year, a new law increased savings for the Senior Exemption from \$5,000 to \$8,000 in Equalized Assessed Value (EAV).

It is important to note that the exemption amount is not the dollar amount by which a tax bill is lowered. EAV is the partial value of a property to which tax rates are applied; it is this figure on which a tax bill is calculated.

The savings for a Senior Citizen Exemption is calculated by multiplying the exemption savings of 8,000 by the local tax rate. The Assessor does not set tax rates.

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To qualify for the **Senior Freeze Exemption** for tax year 2018, a taxpayer must have:

- been born prior to or in the year 1953
- a total household income of \$65,000 or less for [income] tax year 2017
- owned the property or had a legal, equitable or leasehold interest in the property on January 1, 2017 *and* January 1, 2018
- used the property as his or her principal place of residence as of January 1, 2017 and January 1, 2018
- been liable for payment of 2017 and 2018 property taxes

Please Note: Beginning last year, the law expanded eligibility for the Senior Freeze Exemption by increasing allowable total household income to \$65,000, from the previous limit of \$55,000. There is also a new minimum \$2,000 EAV deduction for the Senior Freeze, which will help offset increases in assessed value and help ensure that more seniors benefit from the Senior Exemption.

“If you don't qualify for the Senior Freeze Exemption because you exceed the income level, this does not mean you will not be eligible for the standard Senior Exemption,” Assessor Kaegi explained. “The Senior Exemption has no income restrictions and it is important for those seniors who are eligible to apply.”

Seniors receiving the Senior Citizen Exemption automatically receive the Homeowner Exemption. Seniors receiving the Senior Freeze Exemption automatically receive *both* the Homeowner and Senior Citizen Exemptions.

Eligible seniors who have never applied for the Senior and/or Senior Freeze Exemptions in the past may visit the Assessor's website at www.cookcountyassessor.com and download an application or contact the Assessor's Office at [312-443-7550](tel:312-443-7550) and request a form be mailed to them.

Applications for additional exemptions administered by the Assessor's Office will be available within the next several weeks.