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Assessor's Office mails Senior and Senior Freeze Exemption applications

Illinois law requires seniors to reapply annually

CHICAGO – The office of Cook County Assessor Joseph Berrios has mailed Senior and Senior Freeze Exemption renewal applications for Tax Year 2016. Savings from these exemptions will appear as deductions on the 2017 Second Installment Property Tax Bills mailed this summer.

Nearly 300,000 applications were mailed to seniors who received the exemptions last year. **The application deadline is Wednesday, February 8th** and it is imperative that seniors return their application(s) in order to receive their exemption savings on their tax bills.

The Senior Exemption application is part of a booklet sent to eligible seniors. The booklet also contains the separate, income-based Senior Freeze Exemption application.

“Seniors must remember that, under Illinois law, they must reapply annually for both the Senior *and* Senior Freeze Exemptions in order to continue to receive the deductions on their Second Installment Property Tax Bills,” Berrios said.

To qualify for the **Senior Citizen Exemption** for Tax Year 2016, the property owner must have:

- been born prior to or in the year 1951
- owned the property during 2016 or have a lease or contract for 2016 which makes them responsible for the real estate taxes
- used the property as a principal place of residence in 2016

To qualify for **the Senior Freeze Exemption** for Tax Year 2016, taxpayers must have:

- been born prior to or in the year 1951
- a total household income of \$55,000 or less for [income] Tax Year 2015
- owned the property or had a legal, equitable or leasehold interest in the property on January 1, 2015 *and* January 1, 2016
- used the property as a principal place of residence as of January 1, 2015 and January 1, 2016
- been liable for the payment of 2015 and 2016 property taxes

“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 Senior Exemption,” Berrios explained. “The Senior Exemption has no income restrictions and I'm concerned that seniors might discard the entire booklet and not receive the Senior Exemption savings to which they are entitled.”

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.

(MORE)

January 9, 2016
Senior Exemption mailings
Page Two

Eligible seniors who have never applied for the Senior and/or Senior Freeze Exemptions in the past may visit the Assessor's web site 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 the Homeowner Exemption are also available online. Applications for additional exemptions administered by the Assessor's Office will be available within the next few weeks.

"Our office continues to reach out to Cook County seniors, hosting local community seminars to make them aware of the available exemptions and also help with the application process," Berrios said. "We held a record number of outreaches in 2016 and will work this year to provide local services to an even greater number of seniors in order to ensure they are receiving as much exemption savings as possible."