

***APPLICATION FORMS FOR SENIOR FREEZE MAILED; NEW
PROCESS IN PLACE FOR OTHER SENIOR EXEMPTIONS***

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Oak Park senior citizens who received the Senior Freeze exemption last year will receive renewal applications this week, and will have until March 19 to return them to the Cook County Assessor's office. The applications are for 2007 property taxes, (paid in calendar year 2008) and the savings from the exemptions will appear on tax bills mailed in the fall of 2008. Seniors should feel free to call the office of Oak Park Township Assessor Ali ElSaffar for help completing the forms.

Eligibility and Application Rules for Senior Exemptions

There are two senior citizen property tax exemptions. The Senior Exemption is available to all seniors regardless of income. It reduces property taxes by about \$350, and is available to any owner-occupied residential property whose owner was born in 1942 or earlier. The Senior Freeze provides seniors with additional tax savings if the combined income of all occupants in a senior's household is less than \$50,000, and if the senior has been an owner-occupant of the house since January 1, 2006.

In prior years, seniors had to complete applications every year to obtain the Senior Exemption and the Senior Freeze. This year, however, the rules have changed. All seniors who received the Senior Exemption last year will have the exemption automatically renewed this year; applications to renew the Senior Exemption will no longer be required. Seniors seeking additional tax savings through the Senior Freeze program, however, will have to complete and return the Senior Freeze application, as has been the case in the past.

Information for Seniors not Receiving Mailings

Homeowners who were born in 1942 turned sixty-five in 2007, and thus are likely to be eligible for one of the senior exemptions for the first time. “Taxpayers who recently turned sixty-five will not receive application forms when the senior renewal forms are mailed,” ElSaffar said. “I encourage such individuals to call my office to obtain the forms and information necessary to receive the senior benefits.”

In addition, seniors who have NOT received the Senior Freeze in prior years will NOT receive Senior Freeze renewal applications in the mail this year. “Anyone who is eligible for the Senior Freeze for the first time this year should feel free to come to my office to obtain application forms. The forms are also available online at www.CookCountyAssessor.com,” ElSaffar said.

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