

Assistance

Your County Auditor administers the Homestead Exemption Program at the county level. Questions regarding eligibility status and application procedures should be directed to their office.

Contact:

How the Homestead Exemption Program Can Reduce Your Property Tax Bill

South Carolina



Homestead Exemption Program

Do I qualify?

1. I hold complete fee simple title or life estate to my primary residence.
2. As of December 31 preceding the tax year of the exemption, I
 - was a legal resident of South Carolina for one calendar year.
3. As of December 31 preceding the tax year of the exemption, I
 - was 65 years of age, or
 - was declared totally and permanently disabled by a state or federal agency having the authority to make such a declaration, or
 - was legally blind as certified by a licensed ophthalmologist.

If statements 1, 2 and 3 are true, you are qualified to receive the Homestead Exemption.

Surviving Spouse Benefit

The surviving spouse of a qualified or potentially qualified Homestead recipient may also receive the benefit.

- You are the surviving spouse of a person who was not otherwise qualified for the Homestead Exemption on December 31 preceding the tax year for which the exemption is claimed, but was 65 years of age, legally blind, or permanently disabled at the time of his death, and meet the ownership

and residency requirements (as defined in this pamphlet).

Where do I apply?

Contact the County Auditor's Office in your home county for application information and assistance.

What documents are needed?

Proof of your eligibility is required.

If you are applying due to age, bring your birth certificate, Medicaid card, Medicare card, or driver's license.

If you are applying due to disability, you will need to present documentation from the state or federal agency certifying the disability.

If you are applying due to blindness, you will need to present documentation from a licensed ophthalmologist.

If you are the income beneficiary of a trust, you will need to present a copy of the trust agreement.

Do I need to re-apply annually?

No. Only in the case of the death of the eligible owner or if you move to a new home will re-application be necessary.

However, any changes that may affect your eligibility must be reported to your County Auditor immediately. They are:

- Change in disability status.
- Any change of ownership.
- Rental of your home.
- Remarriage of the surviving spouse.

What is the benefit?

In 2007 the SC Legislature passed legislation that completely exempts from your tax bill all taxes levied for school operating purposes on the value of your legal residence. The Homestead Exemption credit continues to completely exempt the value of \$50,000 for all purposes except for school operating purposes (already exempted by the new 2007 legislation).

Example of a tax bill *with* credits for school operations (school tax credit savings) and homestead exemption:

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Value of Home | \$ 62,500 |
| Assessment ratio for legal residence (4%) | X .04 |
| Total assessed value | 2,500 |
| Total millage for all purposes (285 mills) | X .285 |
| Total taxes due before any credits | \$ 712.50 |

New school tax credit savings:
 $62,500 \times .04 \times 150$ mills school operations = (\$375)

Homestead exemption credit:
 $50,000 \times .04 \times 135$ mills
(285 total - 150 school operating) = (\$270)

Total tax bill with both credits: = \$67.50