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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is an assessment?

A: A property's assessment is a percentage of its market value. Market value, as defined by the International Association of Assessing Officers, is the "most probable price expressed in terms of money that a property would bring if exposed for sale in the open market. The sale should be in an arm's-length transaction between a willing seller and a willing buyer, both of whom are knowledgeable concerning all the uses to which the property is adapted and for which is capable of being used."

Q: Do I qualify for any kind of real property tax exemption?

A: Currently the Town of Otego participates in several exemption programs such as the School Tax Relief (STAR) Credit, Veterans, Clergy, Aged, Farm, and Business Commercial Exemptions. For a complete listing and description of all exemptions and their application forms, please go to: <http://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/exemption/index.htm>

Q: I am a Veteran, what kind of exemption am I eligible to receive?

A: You may be eligible to receive a Wartime, Combat, or Cold War Veteran's exemption if you served during certain times and places in the Armed Forces of the United States. You may also be eligible to receive an additional exemption if you have a service-connected disability. Please note that the veteran's exemption does not apply to school taxes and it only grants 50% of the V.A. disability rating. For a description, please go to: www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/exemption/vetexempt.htm

Q: I am a Senior Citizen, do I qualify for an exemption?

A: Senior citizens that meet income, age, and residency requirements may qualify for an aged exemption. You must be 65 years of age and must have resided in your property for a minimum of 12 consecutive months prior to submitting your application. This exemption, which applies to both, real property and school taxes, allows up to 50% reduction on tax bills if a household income is under \$18,000. Additionally, the Town of Otego has recently approved a resolution that extends our senior citizens exemption. In 2018, seniors who earn under \$26,400 are also eligible to a sliding scale exemption. Because different municipalities have different eligibility criteria, you should contact your local Assessor regarding further information and deadlines.

Q: What is STAR?

A: The School Tax Relief (STAR) is a program that provides partial exemption from school property taxes for owner-occupied primary residences. There are two kinds of STAR exemptions: The Enhanced Star and the Basic Star.

Q: What is School Tax Relief (STAR) Credit?

A: New STAR applicants will no longer receive an exemption in their school tax bill; instead, they will receive a credit in the form of a check directly from New York State. The amount of the check will be the same as the STAR exemption.

Q: I am a senior citizen, do I qualify for the Enhanced Star exemption?

A: The Enhanced Star exemption, which exempts up to \$60,000 of the full market value of a home, applies to seniors 65 years of age or older whose 2016 household adjusted gross income does not exceed \$86,000.

Q: I will turn 65 years old after the March 1, deadline. Do I still qualify?

A: Yes, as long as you turn 65 before December 31 of the same year.

Q: I don't qualify for the Enhanced Star. Do I qualify for the Basic Star exemption?

A: Yes. The Basic Star, which exempts up to \$30,000 of the full market value of a home applies to any homeowner regardless of age, as long as they reside in that legal and primary residence, and the total household income doesn't exceed \$500,000.

Q: I currently have a Basic STAR exemption. Do I still have to register with the State to upgrade to an Enhanced exemption?

A: No. If you presently have a Basic STAR exemption and have not recently purchased your house, you have to upgrade your exemption with your local Assessor.

Q: What other documentation do I need to bring with my Enhanced Star application?

A: Again, if you are applying for the first time, you need to register with the State. However, if you are upgrading from Basic to Enhanced, you are required to bring a photocopy of your 2016 income tax return, as well as proof of your age and home ownership.

Q: I already have an Enhanced Star exemption. Do I still have to renew it every year?

A: Yes. As per State law, you are required to renew your Enhanced Star exemption every year. However, under new legislation you may be eligible to participate in the "Income Verification Program." This option allows recipients of the Enhanced STAR exemption to automatically renew their annual application through the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance. Eligible applicants must file New York State Income Tax Returns on an annual basis. In addition, an authorization form (RP-425-IVP) must be filed with the Assessor. It is recommended that you call our office before you proceed with this option.

Q: What if I decide not to participate in the Income Verification Program?

A: If you do not file State Income Tax Returns or decide not to participate in the "Income Verification Program" you have to renew your exemption every year. A renewal application will be mailed to you every November, and it will be your responsibility to return it to us with the preceding income tax returns or annual income statements, such as W-2 forms, Social Security forms, bank interests, etc.

Q: What do I need to apply for either the Basic or Enhanced Star exemption?

A: You must register with the New York Department of Taxation and Finance by visiting www.tax.ny.gov or by calling (518) 457-2036.

Q: I have been granted a Basic Star exemption. Do I need to renew it every year?

A: No. The Basic Star exemption does not have to be renewed.

Q: Is there a deadline by which I must file the application forms?

A: Yes. The annual deadline for all exemption applications is always March 1st. However, different municipalities have different deadlines; this is why you should contact your local Assessor for further information.

Q: Where can I get the exemption application forms?

A: You must file the application forms with your local Assessor. Your local Assessor is located in the same municipality where you actually reside. You may also download these applications from the New York State Office of Real Property Tax Services' web page at [Http://www.tax.ny.gov/forms/orpts/exemption.htm](http://www.tax.ny.gov/forms/orpts/exemption.htm)

Q: Where can I go with additional questions?

A: The Assessor is continually communicating with the public, answering questions, and dealing with concerns raised by taxpayers. You may reach the Town Assessor at the Town Hall, 3526 State Highway 7, Otego, New York 13825, or by calling (607) 988-2682. You may also visit the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance at www.tax.ny.gov.