

# Tax Relief for the Elderly Committee to Review Existing Ordinance



A Tax Relief for the Elderly Committee has recently been formed by the Board of Selectmen to review the ordinance that governs the town's program for property tax relief for Easton residents who are 65 years old or older and meet other eligibility requirements.

The committee is tasked with studying and investigating the Town's property tax relief program for seniors and reporting its findings to the Board of Finance. The committee will report on the fiscal effect the program has had on property tax revenues and will make any recommendations for any changes the committee feels need to be made to the ordinance.

The Town of Easton provides tax relief for qualifying seniors in two programs, the Tax Abatement program and the optional Tax Deferral program. The following is a summary of these two programs and their requirements as defined under the current ordinance. Some of these may change as a result of the ordinance review in progress.

## Qualification Requirements:

- The applicant must be 65 as of Dec 31, 2020 (or a surviving spouse 60 or older).
- The property must be the applicant's principal residence.

- The applicant must have lived in the residence for at least five years.
- The combined income of all adults living in the residence must be less than \$85,000.
- Income is calculated using the Qualifying Household Income Worksheet.
- The combined assets of all adults living in the residence must be less than \$750,000.

#### Tax Abatement Program:

This program provides a credit against the applicant's real-estate property taxes. The credit is a percentage of last year's tax bill before any tax relief.

- The abatement percentage is calculated on a sliding scale based on income.
- The maximum abatement percentage is 46%

#### Tax Deferral Program (optional):

- This program allows the applicant to defer up to 75% of their remaining tax after all other tax relief benefits have been taken.
- The deferral continues until the house is sold, transferred or vacated or the taxpayer dies.
- Deferred taxes may be repaid without penalty.
- The deferral draws interest at the town's borrowing rate (typically less than 3%).
- The deferral is secured by a lien on the property.

#### Application Process:

- If you live in Easton and are 65 or over you should get a letter in March that contains a tax relief application form and information on how to apply. If you do not receive this letter by the end of March, call the Assessor's Office at 203-268-6291.
- You must schedule an appointment and apply in person at the Town Hall.

- If you are unable to appear at Town Hall in person due to physical limitations, an exception to this requirement can be made.
- You must bring all income documentation listed on the application's check-off list.
- Application must be made by May 15.

Note: Due to pandemic safety measures at Town Hall in person applications may not be possible. Other procedures for applying will be put in place.

A complete description of the program is contained in the *2018 Tax Relief for the Elderly Ordinance* which can be found on the committee's web page at:

<https://www.eastonct.gov/tax-relief-for-the-elderly-committee>.

The committee has no set schedule for meetings, but the agenda of each meeting is announced in advance on the above link. Currently all our meetings are being held over the Zoom app. A link to the app is in each agenda. Questions or comments by the public at these zoom meetings are encouraged.

If you have any questions about the Senior Tax Relief program you can contact me by phone at 203-500-0635 or e-mail via a link on the committee's web page.