



COOK COUNTY ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Joseph Berrios

GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING SENIOR CITIZEN EXEMPTIONS

We have extended the application deadline for Senior Citizen Exemption and Senior Freeze Applications. The new deadline is March 1, 2017.

We are happy to provide this additional time for you to apply; please note all exemptions except the Standard Homeowner Exemption *must be applied for each year*.

It is important for you to know that the Cook County Assessor's Office (CCAO) cannot accept emailed or FAXed copies of applications. Hard copies with an original "wet" signature are required; FAXes and scan/emails prevent "wet" signatures, of course.

So, we can only receive applications by: US Mail to our Chicago location, other carriers delivering to our Chicago location or you dropping off in-person at any CCAO location. For in-person drop-off, a complete list of CCAO offices is below.

The Senior Citizen Exemption and Senior Freeze Exemption Application form (an all-inclusive form) and other forms can be found on our web site. They can be easily printed using any computer. Here is the link: <http://sub.cookcountyassessor.com/assets/forms/SRFrz.pdf>
If you have a problem downloading the form, please do not hesitate to call me back.

Also, please be sure to include a copy of your driver's license or State of Illinois I.D. showing that you live at the address which the exemption is being applied for.

Again, please get the completed form to the Assessor's Office by only US Mail, other carriers or in-person-drop off. We hope this doesn't cause inconvenience, but we trust you know that original signed documents are essential in *any* application process.

We assure you that the service, courtesy, attention and overall caring you will receive from us is precisely the way Assessor Joseph Berrios wants to treat every taxpayer. It is our pleasure. CCAO locations are:

- **Cook County Assessor's Office Chicago office:** 118 N. Clark St., Room 320, Chicago, IL 60602 (312) 443-7550
- **Cook County Assessor's Office Skokie office:** 5600 Old Orchard Road, Room 149, Skokie, IL 60007 (847) 470-7237
- **Cook County Assessor's Office Bridgeview office:** 10200 S. 76th Ave, Room 237, Bridgeview, IL 60455 (708) 974-6451
- **Cook County Assessor's Office Markham office:** 16501 S. Kedzie Ave, Room 237, Markham, IL 60426 (708) 232-4100

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Once you have submitted your application, you may wish to have confirmation that it has been processed and/or approved. Within approximately 4-to-6 weeks after you mail the exemption application, we will be able to tell you the final status of your application.

In other words, we'll know within 4-to-6 weeks if you are approved for exemption savings - but you will also later need to make sure you actually **receive** the savings/deduction by looking at your Second Installment Property Tax Bill which comes out in the summer. All exemption savings are deducted from only Second Installment Property Tax Bills.

So, please wait until 4-to-6 weeks have passed since you mailed or dropped off the application and then contact the Assessor's Office. At that time, we should be able to verify if your exemption application has been processed and approved. The number to call is **312-443-7550**. We ask for the 4-to-6 week period because CCAO needs time to handle the hundreds of thousands of exemption applications we receive.

If there's ever a problem with your application we'll address it thoroughly; usually, there are no issues. Again, we want to always serve you effectively as part of Assessor Berrios' policy of ensuring no one pays more than his or her fair share of property taxes.

Thank you.

This media release has been sent to all outlets in Cook County.

Assessor Berrios Extends Deadline for Senior and Senior Freeze Exemption Applications

CHICAGO – Cook County Assessor Joseph Berrios announced today that his office has extended the deadline for the Senior Citizen Exemption 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. **The extended application deadline is March 1, 2017.**

Nearly 300,000 applications were mailed to seniors who received the exemptions last year. The Senior Exemption application is part of a booklet mailed 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, or have a lease or contract which makes them responsible for the real estate taxes, and
- used the property as a principal place of residence.

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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, and
- 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.

Eligible seniors, who have never applied for the Senior and/or Senior Freeze Exemptions in the past, may visit the Assessor’s Office website at www.cookcountyassessor.com and download an application or contact the Assessor’s Office at 312-443-7550 and request a form be mailed to them. Applications for the Homeowner Exemption and additional exemptions administered by the Assessor’s Office will also be made available on line.

We urge all applicants and interested parties to read the detailed instructions on how to apply for exemptions *and* how to follow up on the status of applications, if desired. They can be found at this link on the Assessor’s Office website at <http://sub.cookcountyassessor.com/assets/forms/2017SeniorExemptionApplicationDeadlineExtension.pdf>

“At all times, seniors need all the help they can get,” Assessor Berrios said. “That is why we have extended the deadline and will continue to do everything possible to ensure that Cook County seniors are receiving all the exemption savings to which they are rightfully entitled.”



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118 N. Clark St., 3rd Floor, Chicago, IL 60602
(312) 443-7550 www.cookcountyassessor.com