

Senior Property Tax Exemption Article – Oct. 15 Town Meeting

This means-tested exemption is intended to help seniors with low income and assets pay no more than 10% of their income in property taxes.

The exemption for each applicant is capped at 50% of total property tax bill.

The total annual cost of the benefit for all recipients will be capped at .25% of the residential levy (\$162,000 for FY18 figures).

Goals

- Encourage seniors to take advantage of existing exemptions & the MA Sr. Circuit Breaker Tax Credit
- Provide additional relief for qualified seniors still paying over 10% of their income in property tax.

Unfortunately, Social Security increases have been almost non-existent for the last decade, while food, health care, fuel, property taxes and other expenses have increased dramatically. Some seniors on fixed incomes or faced with increased costs due to illness or loss of income due to the death of a spouse are caught in a financial squeeze.

Criteria (Limit \$ are for FY18 and may change annually)

- Age 65 or older on July 1st
- Own and occupy the property on July 1st
- Westford resident for the past 10 years
- Received MA Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit
- Home Assessed Value Limit: \$400,000
- Income Limits: Single: \$39,900 Married: \$51,600
Head-of-Household (HoH): \$49,700
- Asset Limits: Single: \$109,749 Married/HoH: \$150,966

Where Will the Money Come From?

The money to pay for this benefit as proposed, will be taken out of the Town's Overlay Account. Overlay is an amount of money raised each year within the levy limit that is used to provide for property tax abatements and exemptions.

This method of funding does not require a tax shift or tax increase of any kind.

The exemption must be renewed or replaced after three years, based on Westford's results and experiences.

[SLIDTR – Senior, Low Income and Disabled Tax Relief Committee – 09/109/18]

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