

7/11/17

How the Homestead Exemption works in SC

Editor's note: The following is a public service announcement by Oconee County Auditor Christy Hubbard seeking to inform residents about the Homestead Exemption and the requirements for qualifying.

The Homestead Exemption is an exemption of taxes on the first \$50,000 Value of your Legal Residence for homeowners over age 65, totally and permanently disabled, or legally blind.

Do I qualify for the Homestead Exemption?

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

1. You hold complete fee simple title or life estate to your primary residence. The Homestead Exemption is a complete exemption of taxes on the first \$50,000 in Fair Market Value of your Legal Residence for homeowners over age 65, totally and permanently disabled, or legally blind. In 2007, legislation was passed 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).

2. As of Dec. 31 preceding the tax year of the exemption, you were a legal resident of South Carolina for one calendar year.

3. As of Dec. 31 preceding the tax year of the exemption, you:

- were 65 years of age, or
- were declared totally and permanently disabled by a state or federal agency having the authority to make such a declaration, or
- are legally blind as certified by a licensed ophthalmologist.

Does a surviving spouse receive the Homestead Exemption benefit?

The surviving spouse of a qualified or potentially qualified Homestead recipient may receive the benefit as a surviving spouse as long as

the surviving spouse remains unmarried.

Where do I apply for the Homestead Exemption?

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

What documents are required as proof of eligibility when applying?

— 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 you move to a new residence.

If I move, do I qualify for the Homestead Exemption?

Yes, an exemption is granted on the new residence if you continue to meet the following requirements:

1. You hold complete fee simple title or life estate to your primary residence.

2. As of Dec. 31 preceding the tax year of the exemption, you were a legal resident of South Carolina for one calendar year.

3. As of Dec. 31 preceding the tax year of the exemption, you:

- were 65 years of age, or
- were declared totally and permanently disabled by a state or federal agency having the authority to make such a declaration, or
- are legally blind as certified by a licensed ophthalmologist.

If you think you may qualify for this exemption on the home that you own and claim as your legal residence, please call the Oconee County Auditor's Office at (864) 688-4158.