



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Cook County Assessor's Office Mails Annual Senior and Senior Freeze Exemption Renewal Applications**

*Legislation crafted by Assessor Berrios results in expanded eligibility and exemption savings for seniors this year*

CHICAGO – Cook County Assessor Joseph Berrios' Office has mailed Senior and Senior Freeze Exemption renewal applications for Tax Year 2017. Legislation crafted by Berrios will result in additional savings for these exemptions that will appear as deductions on Second Installment Property Tax Bills mailed this coming summer.

Nearly 300,000 applications were mailed to seniors who received the exemptions last year. **The application deadline is Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> and state law requires annual renewal in order to continue to receive exemption savings.**

The Senior Exemption application is part of a booklet sent to eligible seniors. The booklet also contains the separate, income-based Senior Freeze Exemption application.

"It may be a minor inconvenience to return the renewal applications, but it is even more important for seniors to receive their exemptions this year," Berrios said. "Seniors have worked hard their entire lives and are entitled to these money-saving exemptions. It is important they do not lose them, especially this year with the new law bringing additional savings."

To qualify for the **Senior Citizen Exemption** for Tax Year 2017, a taxpayer must have:

- been born prior to or in the year 1952
- owned the property during 2017 or have a lease or contract for 2017 which makes them responsible for the real estate taxes
- used the property as his or her principal place of residence in 2017

*Please Note: The new law will increase savings this year for the Senior Exemption from \$5,000 to \$8,000 in Equalized Assessed Value (EAV). It is important to note that the exemption amount is not the dollar amount by which a tax bill is lowered.*

*EAV is the partial value of a property to which tax rates are applied; it is this figure on which a tax bill is calculated. The Assessor does not set tax rates. The savings for a Senior Citizen Exemption is calculated by multiplying the exemption savings of 8,000 by the local tax rate.*

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**Cook County Assessor's Office**  
**Cook County Assessor's Office Mails Exemption Renewal Applications to Seniors**  
**Add 1**

To qualify for the **Senior Freeze Exemption** for Tax Year 2017, a taxpayer must have:

- been born prior to or in the year 1952
- a total household income of \$65,000 or less for [income] Tax Year 2016
- owned the property or had a legal, equitable or leasehold interest in the property on January 1, 2016 *and* January 1, 2017
- used the property as his or her principal place of residence as of January 1, 2016 and January 1, 2017
- been liable for payment of 2016 and 2017 property taxes

*Please Note: The new law expands eligibility by increasing allowable total household income to \$65,000, from the previous limit of \$55,000. There is also a new minimum \$2,000 EAV deduction for the Senior Freeze, which will help offset increases in assessed value and help ensure that more seniors benefit from the Senior Exemption.*

"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 web site at [www.cookcountyassessor.com](http://www.cookcountyassessor.com) and download an application or contact the Assessor's Office at [312-443-7550](tel:312-443-7550) and request a form be mailed to them. Applications for the Homeowner Exemption are also available online.

Applications for additional exemptions administered by the Assessor's Office will be available within the next several weeks.

"Our office continues to reach out to Cook County seniors, visiting local communities to make them aware of the available exemptions and also help with the application process," Berrios said. "We made a record number of outreach appearances in 2017 and will work this year to provide local services to an even greater number of seniors. Our goal is to ensure they are receiving the most exemptions savings possible."