

Homestead Exemptions

Homestead exemptions have been enacted to reduce the burden of ad valorem taxation for Georgia homeowners. The exemptions apply to homestead property owned by the taxpayer and occupied as his or her legal residence (some exceptions to this rule apply and your tax commissioner can explain them to you). Homestead exemptions are deducted from the assessed value of the qualifying property (40% of the fair market value). **The home must be owned and occupied as of January 1st of the year for which the exemption is sought.**

An applicant seeking a homestead exemption shall file a written application with the Lumpkin County Board of Tax Assessors at any time during the calendar year subsequent to the property becoming the primary residence of the applicant up to and including the date for the closing of the books, which is April 1 for Lumpkin County, for the return of taxes for the calendar year. Homestead applications received after that date will be applied to the next tax year.

First time homeowners need to bring a copy of their warranty deed to insure their application is filed correctly.

Georgia law allows for the year-round filing of homestead applications but the application must be received by April 1 of the year for which the exemption is first claimed by the taxpayer. Homestead applications received after that date will be applied to the next tax year.

Once granted, the homestead exemption is automatically renewed each year and the taxpayer does not have to apply again unless there is a change of residence, ownership, or the taxpayer seeks to qualify for a different kind of exemption.

Under authority of the State Constitution several different types of homestead exemptions are provided. In addition, local governments are authorized to provide for increased exemption amounts and several have done so. The tax commissioner in your county can answer questions regarding the standard exemptions as well as any local exemptions that are in place.

The Standard Homestead Exemption is available to all homeowners who otherwise qualify by ownership and residency requirements and it is an amount equal to \$2,000 which is deducted from the 40% assessed value of the homestead property. The exemption applies to the maintenance and operation portion of the mill rate levy of the county and the county school system and the State mill rate levy. It does not apply to the portion of the mill rate levied to retire bonded indebtedness.

The Local County Exemptions supersede the state exemption amount when the local exemption is greater than the state exemption.

Lumpkin county has such exemptions:

Homeowners **62 years of age or older**, as of January 1 of the taxable year, provided the taxable income of the applicant and spouse does not exceed \$20,000, are entitled to an exemption of \$30,000 off the assessed value for school taxes.

School Tax Exemption:

Persons 65 years of age or older, or permanently disabled as shown by required documents can receive an exemption of up to \$120,000 off the value of their property for school tax purposes. This would include the primary residence and not more than 5 contiguous acres of land immediately surrounding such residence. The value of that property in excess of such exempted amount shall remain subject to taxation. Application is made with the Board of Tax Assessors.

Application for County and/ or City Tax Exemption is available to all homeowners who otherwise qualify by ownership and residency requirements and who are 65 years of age or older/ or permanently disabled as shown by required documents can receive an exemption of \$60,000 off the assessed value of the homestead property. This would include the primary residence and not more than 5 contiguous acres of land immediately surrounding such residence. The value of that property in excess of such exempted amount shall remain subject to taxation. Application is made with the Board of Tax Assessors.

The Disabled Veterans Homestead Exemption is available to certain disabled veterans, for 2018 this exemption is an amount up to \$81,080 deducted from the 40% assessed value of the homestead property. This exemption applies to all ad valorem tax levies; however, it is restricted to certain types of very serious disabilities (that are service-connected disabilities) and proof of disability, either from the Veterans Administration or from a private physician in certain circumstances.

A similar exemption in the same amount is now available to the un-remarried surviving spouse of a member of the armed forces of the United States who was killed in any war or armed conflict engaged in by the United States. The surviving spouse must furnish appropriate documentation that spousal benefits are received as a result of the death of the armed forces member.

The Standard Elderly School Tax Homestead

Exemption is an increased homestead exemption for homeowners 62 and older where the net income of the applicant and spouse does not exceed \$10,000 for the preceding year. A portion of Social Security income and certain retirement income are excluded from the calculation of the income threshold. This exemption applies to school tax including taxes levied to retire bonded indebtedness. The amount of the exemption is up to \$10,000 deducted from the 40% assessed value of the homestead property.

The Standard Elderly General Homestead Exemption is available to homeowners who otherwise qualify and who are 65 and older where the net income of the applicant and spouse does not exceed \$10,000 for the preceding year. Social Security income and certain retirement income are excluded from the calculation of the income threshold. This exemption, which is in an amount up to \$4,000 deducted from the 40% assessed value of the homestead property, applies to county taxes, school taxes, and the state tax and it does apply to taxes levied to retire bonded indebtedness.

Homestead Exemption for Senior Citizens is in an amount equal to the actual levy for state ad valorem tax purposes on the residence and no more than 10 contiguous acres of land. This exemption is in addition to any other homestead to which the applicant qualifies.