

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING DISCLAIMER BELOW, Please DO NOT PROCESS APPLICATIONS WITHOUT IT:

**“Applicants are required to include and submit a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs, dated no earlier than 2015, verifying the applicant’s percentage of disability. Application forms cannot be processed without such a letter”.**

**Old letters from Dept of Veterans Affairs will not be accepted.**

Disabled Veteran exemption applications will be mailed on January 27, 2016 &  
Disabled Person exemption applications will be mailed on February 1, 2016.

Disabled Veteran deadline: March 2, 2016

Disabled Person Deadline: March 2, 2016

## DRAMATICALLY HIGHER TAX SAVINGS FOR SOME DISABLED VETERANS TAKES EFFECT

Contact: Assessor Connie Carosielli, 847-437-0300

Under a new law taking effect this year, veterans of the US Armed Forces who were severely wounded while serving their country will no longer be required to pay property taxes in Illinois.

A property tax exemption for disabled veterans has been in effect since 2007, but the law taking effect this year applies to more disabled veterans and provides greater tax savings than was the case in prior years. Under the new law, the most severely wounded veterans will not pay any property taxes at all. "Given these changes," Connie Carosiellisaid, "I urge all disabled veterans to check the eligibility requirements under the new law."

**Eligibility Rules and Tax Savings.** To qualify for the Disabled Veterans Exemption, a property must be owned and occupied by a disabled veteran, and the veteran must have a disability that is connected to military service. The law requires that the service-connected disability be certified by the US Department of Veterans Affairs, which determines the extent of a veteran's disability. The chart below reflects the savings taking effect this year:

<u>Level of Disability</u>	<u>Tax Savings</u>
70% or more	Veteran's home is completely exempt from property tax
50%-69%	\$5,000 in Equalized Assessed Value (about \$X in savings in TOWNSHIP)
30%-49%	\$2,500 in Equalized Assessed Value (about \$X in savings in TOWNSHIP)
0%-29%	No tax savings for this level of disability

Houses with very high market values (\$917,000 or more last year) are not eligible for the exemption. It should also be noted that if a disabled veteran dies and is survived by a spouse, the surviving spouse can retain the Disabled Veterans Exemption until the survivor remarries.

**First Installment Bills.** First installment tax bills are issued before any exemptions are calculated. This means that disabled veterans who are completely exempt from paying taxes this year will nonetheless receive a first installment tax bill that is 55% of their total property tax bill from last year. Once second installment bills come out in July, however, these veterans will be eligible for a refund of the amount paid for the first installment. Veterans with questions about first installment bills should call the Township Assessor's office.

**Application Information.** All veterans who received the Disabled Veterans Exemption last year will receive renewal forms in late January, and must return them by March 2. The renewal applications must include a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs dated after January 1, 2015 that verifies the veteran's level of disability.

Those who did not apply for the exemption last year will not get an application in the mail. "In the past, veterans with disabilities of 50% or less were not eligible for the exemption, but eligibility now starts at a disability level of 30%," YOUR TOWNSHIP ASSESSOR said. "These newly eligible veterans, along with any other disabled veteran, can call my office if they have questions about the exemption or need help completing the application."

January 28, 2016



**Facts Regarding Disabled Veterans Exemption Changes**

- The **Disabled Veterans Homeowner Exemption** provides an annual reduction in the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of the primary residence occupied by a disabled veteran. The EAV is the *value on which each property tax bill is computed*, so reducing your EAV will likely lower your tax bill.

Again, please note EAV is *not the amount of your tax* and its reduction is not the amount by which your tax *bill* would be lowered.

- This is not a new exemption; it was created in 2007. Recent legislation (SB 107) increased the amount of Disabled Veterans Homeowner Exemption savings and expanded eligibility for the Exemption. For the first time, certain disabled veterans will be completely exempt from property tax.

- The new law is retroactive to Tax Year 2015. Its *changes* to the Disabled Veterans Homeowner Exemption begin with Tax Year 2015, payment of which is due in 2016.

- The Cook County Assessor's Office (CCAO) will have Disabled Veterans Homeowner Exemption application forms ready for taxpayers beginning on January 27, 2016. These application forms will be available on the CCAO website: [www.cookcountyassessor.com](http://www.cookcountyassessor.com) and by mail. For further information, please call (312) 443-7550.

- **The applications are due back to CCAO by March 2, 2016.** Most disabled veteran taxpayers who turn in exemption applications for the 2015 Tax Year will, as always, see savings deducted *precisely on schedule* from their Second-Installment tax bill in July 2016.

The smaller group of disabled veterans *completely* exempt from property taxes might receive in February a First-Installment bill which should be paid. Any overpayment **will be fully refunded** during the summer. This one-time situation affects only these completely-exempt disabled veterans and after this year they will never in any future year receive a tax bill balance due as long as their disability level remains unchanged.

- **A non-remarried surviving spouse** of a disabled veteran may continue to receive this exemption on the deceased spouse's primary residence or transfer this exemption to a new primary residence.

- The chart below outlines the changes in exemption amounts based on percentage of disability between the current law and the new law:

Taxable Years	Percentage of Disability	Exemption Amount*
2010-2014 (Tax Years)	70% and greater	\$5,000
	50-69%	\$2,500
2015 and thereafter (Tax Years)	30%-49%	\$2,500
	50%-69%	\$5,000
	70% and greater	Total Exemption

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE:** This amount will be deducted from your Equalized Assessed value (EAV), which is the value on which your tax is computed. Please note EAV is not the amount of your tax and its reduction is not the amount by which your tax bill would be lowered.



## COOK COUNTY ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Joseph Berrios

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The office of Cook County Assessor Joseph Berrios has a long history of serving veterans and other taxpayers with exemptions. Assessor Berrios supported and helped pass the 2015 legislation which greatly expanded the Disabled Veterans Homeowner Exemption\* and this office continues to assist veterans.

There may be some concern that disabled veterans are possibly not receiving their exemptions. In fact, all veterans will receive their exemption deductions at the normal time. However, some disabled veterans who are *completely* exempt from property taxes might receive a bill in February with a balance due in March.

This is a one-time situation that actually does not affect the vast majority of those who qualify for the Disabled Veterans Homeowner Exemption. All reductions in their tax bills will occur perfectly on schedule. It affects only the smaller number of disabled veterans who are at least 70% disabled and thus *completely* exempt from property taxes under the new law.

For the completely exempt, any overpayment will be refunded in full this summer. In all future years they will never receive a tax bill balance due, if their disability level is unchanged. Again, this is a one-time situation for this smaller group of vets--to whom we are equally committed.

Please remember the Disabled Veterans Homeowner Exemption must be applied for each year. State law requires the Assessor's Office to annually receive a renewal application including the Veterans Administration (VA) certification showing his or her disability level.

**Applications** for this exemption will be available **beginning January 27, 2016** on the Cook County Assessor's Office web site ([www.cookcountyassessor.com](http://www.cookcountyassessor.com)) and by mail. Applications are due back by March 2, 2016. For further information, please call 312-443-7550.

The Assessor's Office and the Cook County Department of Veterans Affairs ([www.cookcountyil.gov/veterans-affairs](http://www.cookcountyil.gov/veterans-affairs) or 312-603-6423) will hold three seminars in February:

- February 8<sup>th</sup> - 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at **McCook Athletic & Exposition-Pub** at the MAX, 4720 S. Vernon Ave., McCook IL (East side of the building). <http://www.max-mccook.com/> (708) 485-1555
- February 16<sup>th</sup> - 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at **Evanston Vet Center**, 1901 Howard St., Evanston, IL. <http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5048> (847) 332-1019
- February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.: **Orland Park Civic Center**, 14750 Ravinia Ave., Orland Park, IL; <https://www.orland-park.il.us/facilities/facility/details/Orland-Park-Civic-Center-71> (708) 403-6200

[For information on seminars scheduled after this list was printed, please contact the Cook County Department of Veterans Affairs: 312-603-6423.]

*\*The official statute is the Disabled Veterans Standard Homestead Exemption*





## Disabled Veterans' Standard Homeowner Exemption

### General Information

#### What is the Disabled Veterans Standard Homeowner Exemption?

The Disabled Veterans Standard Homeowner Exemption provides an annual reduction in the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) on the primary residence occupied by a disabled veteran on January 1st of the assessment year. The amount of the exemption each year depends on the percentage of the disabled veteran's service connected disability as certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs. A disabled veteran at least 70% disabled will be completely exempt from property taxes. A disabled veteran with at least a 50% to 69% service-connected disability will receive an annual \$5,000 reduction in EAV. A veteran with a 30% to 49% service-connected disability will receive an annual \$2,500 reduction in EAV.

#### Who is eligible?

To qualify for the Disabled Veterans Standard Homeowner Exemption, the veteran must meet the following requirements

- Be an Illinois resident who has served as a member of the U.S. Armed Forces on active duty or State active duty, Illinois National Guard or U.S. Reserve Forces and have been honorably discharged.
- Have at least a 30% service-connected disability certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs,
- Own and occupy the property as the primary residence on January 1st of the assessment year and
- Have a total EAV for the primary residence of less than \$250,000, excluding the EAV of property used for commercial purposes or rented for more than six months

**Note:** The property's total EAV must be less than \$250,000 after subtracting any portion used for commercial purposes. Commercial purposes include any portion of the property rented for more than six months.

A non-remarried surviving spouse of a disabled veteran can continue to receive this exemption on the spouse's homestead property or transfer this exemption to a new primary residence. To qualify, the surviving spouse must meet the following requirements:

- Sell the disabled veteran's previous property before transferring the exemption to his or her new primary residence, and
- Occupy the property as the primary residence and hold a legal or beneficial title to the property on January 1st of the assessment year.

#### What types of documentation must be provided with this form as proof of my disability?

An applicant must provide a disability certification or verification letter from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for the current assessment year and one of the following documents that is the original or a copy certified by the county recorder, record of deeds, Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs or the National Archives Record Center.

- Form DD214 or separation of service from the War Department (military service prior to 1950); or
- Certification of Military Service Form.
- Applicants are required to please include and submit a letter from the **Department of Veterans Affairs**, dated no earlier than 2015, verifying the applicant's percentage of disability. Application forms cannot be processed without such letter.

A non-remarried surviving spouse of a disabled veteran applying for the first time or transferring the exemption must also provide the disabled veteran's marriage and death certificates and proof of ownership.

#### When will I receive my exemption?

The year that you apply for this exemption is referred to as the assessment year. If your exemption is granted, it will be applied to the property tax bills that are paid the year following the assessment year.

#### What are the different types of homeowner exemptions available for disabled persons and/or veterans?

The Disabled Veterans Homestead Exemption allows for up to a \$70,000 reduction in assessed value for federally approved, specially adapted housing. This exemption is administered and certified by the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs. Three additional exemptions are administered by the Cook County Assessor's Office. The Disabled Persons Homeowner Exemption allows for an annual \$2,000 reduction in EAV and the Disabled Veterans Standard Homeowner Exemption allows for an annual reduction of \$2,500 or \$5,000 in a property's EAV. **Please Note:** you can claim only one of the three exemptions referenced above. A Returning Veterans Homeowner Exemption is also available to veterans returning from active duty. This exemption allows for a \$5,000 reduction in EAV and may be received in addition to any of the other exemptions referenced above.

#### When and where must I file?

You must apply for this exemption each year with the Cook County Assessor's Office by the due date in order to receive this exemption. For additional information or assistance in filing this application, please contact the Cook County Assessor's Office. The office's address and telephone number are atop this page.