

Seniors and disabled veterans could qualify for property tax exemption

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

The Colorado Constitution establishes a property tax exemption for senior citizens and disabled veterans. For those who qualify, 50 percent of the first \$200,000 in actual value of the primary residence is exempted from property tax. The State of Colorado pays the property taxes on the exempted value. Qualifying seniors are urged to submit applications if they have not yet done so.

Basic qualifications for senior citizen exemption outlined

Generally, each of the following statements must be true to qualify for the senior citizen exemption. The qualifying senior:

- 1) Must be at least 65 years old on Jan. 1, 2013.

- 2) Must be the current owner of record and listed as the owner of record for at least 10 consecutive years prior to Jan. 1, 2013.

- 3) Must occupy the property as his/her primary residence and must have done so for at least 10 consecutive years prior to Jan. 1, 2013.

There are exceptions to the basic qualifications. The applicant may still qualify if one or more of the following statements are true. Ownership is in the spouse's name and the spouse also occupies the property; the property has been transferred to or purchased by a trust, corporate partnership or other legal entity solely for estate planning purposes; the qualifying senior or his/her spouse was or is confined to a health care facility; or the applicant is the surviving spouse of a senior who met the requirements on Jan. 1, 2002 or on any Jan. 1 thereafter.

Basic qualifications for senior citizen exemption explained

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Generally, each of the following statements must be true to qualify:

1) The applicant must be a veteran who sustained a service-connected disability while serving on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States. This includes members of the National Guard and Reserves who sustained injuries while serving on active duty.

2) The applicant must have been honorably-discharged.

3) The United States Department of Veterans Affairs has rated the applicant's service connected disability as 100 percent permanent and total. VA unemployability awards do not meet the requirement for determining an applicant's eligibility.

4) The applicant must be the owner of record and must have been the owner of record since Jan. 1 of the current year.

5) The applicant must have occupied the property as his/her primary residence since Jan. 1 of the current year.

Because of exceptions to the basic qualifications, the applicant may still qualify if one or more of the following statements are true. Ownership is in the spouse's name and the spouse also occupies the property; the property has been transferred to or purchased by a trust, corporate partnership or other legal entity solely for estate planning purposes; or the qualifying disabled veteran or his/her spouse was or is confined to a health care facility.

To apply, complete the appropriate application form and return it to the county assessor for the senior exemption by Monday, July 15 or return to the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs by Monday, July 1 for the veterans exemption.

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Anyone who would like to receive an application form or a brochure that explains the senior citizen exemption or the disabled veteran exemption in greater detail or for any questions regarding the exemptions, please call the Phillips County assessor's office at 970-854-3151.

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