

Your Property Taxes

By The Cook County Treasurer

State lawmakers have made it easier for people with disabilities to continue receiving annual property tax relief.

Cook County homeowners who receive the Persons with Disabilities Exemption don't have to reapply for the benefit every year because lawmakers in Springfield acted to allow the benefit to automatically renew.

Exemptions are tax breaks that typically reduce a property's Equalized Assessed Valuation, or EAV. The Persons with Disabilities Exemption reduces a property's EAV by \$2,000.

Without automatic renewal, people receiving the benefit may forget to reapply each year and miss having their tax bill reduced by potentially hundreds of dollars.

That's what happened to a Streamwood resident named Noemi. But she happened to catch our phone bank on ABC 7 and realized she might be missing exemptions.

So, she called in and treasurer's office team members quickly determined she hadn't applied for her disability exemption for four straight years. We added up those missed exemptions and promptly mailed her a check for more than \$1,200.

And she's not alone. Right now, the Treasurer's office is sitting on some \$19 million in missed exemptions.

If you think you or a loved one might be missing this tax break, here are the requirements that must be met to receive the Persons with Disabilities Exemption:

The person with a disability who is responsible for paying property taxes must be the owner and occupy the residence as of January 1 of the year for which the application is being submitted.

The homeowner must submit proof of disability, such as a Class 2 Illinois Person with a Disability Identification Card.

The property cannot receive this exemption in the same year its owner receives the Veterans with Disabilities Exemption for Specially Adapted Housing or the Veterans with Disabilities Exemption.

Other exemptions, including the Homeowner Exemption and the Senior Citizen Exemption also automatically renew annually. However, people receiving the Senior Freeze Exemption, which is available for senior citizens with an annual household income of \$75,000 or less, must reapply every year to demonstrate they continue to meet income eligibility requirements.

The office website, cookcountytreasurer.com, has more information about exemptions and the application process.

Monitoring exemptions, and any you might have missed, could pay off for you like it did for Noemi. But your right to claim exemptions expires after four years, so the time to act is now!