

Real Estate Tax Exemptions for Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons

By: Steve Walker, Culpeper County Board of Supervisors East Fairfax District

In these tough economic times, Culpeper County is proud to offer tax exemptions for seniors age 65 and older and for disabled persons. Culpeper allows tax exemptions for real estate owned by and occupied as the sole housing for people 65 and older or a person with a permanent, total disability. Exceptions also exist for someone living in a nursing home or assisted living facility, as long as they still own their home.

There is some math involved in determining if you are eligible for a real estate tax exemption, but it can be worth it. First, the total combined income in the preceding calendar year (January through December) can not exceed \$50,000 for all the owners of the dwelling and their relatives living in the dwelling. The first \$6,500 of income is not included in the eligibility formula for each relative living there.

Your net combined financial worth (checking account amount, savings, stocks, bonds, IRA, money market accounts, personal property, etc) can not exceed \$200,000. This doesn't include typical home contents, the value of the home itself and up to 10 acres of land upon which the home is situated.

The amount of tax credit is determined by the applicant's income and net worth. There is an annual cap of \$1500 on the amount of relief that can be provided.

First time applicants may submit an application at any time during the current tax years. Then you must renew your request each year on or before April 1st.

There is some paperwork you should have ready when you apply. For proof of income you will need your most recent bank statements and other accounts, your most recent income tax return if you are required to file and you may be asked for information on your automobiles, real estate or other assets. If you are disabled and under 65 you will have to provide documentation from the Social Security, Veterans Administration or Railroad Retirement indicating your disability.

You may wonder why Culpeper County has developed this program. It is because Culpeper places great value on our seniors and disabled citizens, especially those on limited and fixed incomes. The County has a similar program for agriculture, Land Use Taxation. We can all be very proud, as I am, of the importance Culpeper's county government places on all of our citizens including those that require some assistance and those who continue the traditions of Culpeper's agrarian roots.

To find out if you are eligible and what paperwork to submit, contact the Division of Real Estate Assessments at 727-3411 or in person at 118 W. Davis Street, Suite 100, Culpeper, VA.

Aging Together is a regional partnership that works to improve the lives of senior citizens and their caregivers. The Culpeper County Team meets the first Thursday of every month at 10am at the Department of Social Services Board Room on 219 East Davis Street. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. For more information visit us at www.agingtogether.org or call (540) 829-6405.