



Michael J. Heffernan
Commissioner of Revenue

Sean R. Cronin
Senior Deputy Commissioner

TAXPAYER’S GUIDE TO LOCAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

SENIORS SURVIVING SPOUSES MINOR CHILDREN (OF DECEASED PARENT) Clauses 17, 17C, 17C½, 17D

The Department of Revenue (DOR) has created this fact sheet to provide general information about local property tax exemptions for seniors, surviving spouses and minor children of a deceased parent. **It is not designed to address all questions or issues and does not change any provision of the Massachusetts General Laws. To find out about the specific eligibility and application requirements in your city or town, you must contact your local board of assessors.** The DOR cannot determine your eligibility or give you legal advice. Property taxes are assessed and collected by cities and towns, not by the DOR. Under state law, only your board of assessors, as the local tax administrator, can decide whether you qualify for an exemption. If you disagree with its decision, you may appeal to the state Appellate Tax Board (or county commissioners if your county’s government has not been abolished).

INTRODUCTION

Cities and towns may give property tax exemptions to some individuals as defined by state law. An exemption discharges the taxpayer from the legal obligation to pay all or a portion of the tax assessed for the fiscal year. Exemptions are found in various clauses of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5 ([M.G.L. c. 59, § 5](#)).

Clauses 17, 17C, 17C½ or 17D provide partial exemptions to (1) seniors, (2) surviving spouses, and (3) minor children with a deceased parent, who meet specific ownership, occupancy and asset requirements. Seniors 70 or older may, alternatively, qualify for an exemption under Clauses 41, 41B, 41C or 41C½, which provide a higher benefit, but have stricter eligibility requirements. Clause 17 is the basic exemption for the three categories of taxpayers. Over the years, as asset values rose, the Legislature enacted alternative exemptions (Clauses 17C, 17C½ and 17D), and options within those exemptions, that cities and towns may adopt.

Clause 17 applies unless the legislative body of your city or town has voted, subject to local charter, to accept another clause. The most recently accepted clause establishes the eligibility rules in your city or town.

<p>EXEMPTION AMOUNT</p>	<p>\$175 \$227.50 in Arlington</p> <p>The amount may be increased annually up to the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), as determined by the DOR each year. This increase applies only if the legislative body of your city or town has voted, subject to local charter, to accept this local option.</p>
--------------------------------	---

<p>APPLICATIONS</p>	<p>You must file an application for each fiscal year with the assessors in the city or town where your property is located. The application is due on April 1, or three months after the actual tax bills are mailed, whichever is later. Filing on time is required. By law, the assessors may not waive this filing deadline, nor act on a late application, for any reason. Filing an application does not entitle you to delay your tax payment.</p>
<p>DOCUMENTATION</p>	<p>You must provide the assessors with whatever information is reasonably required to establish eligibility. This information may include, but is not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Birth certificates. 2. Evidence of ownership, domicile and occupancy. 3. Bank and other asset account statements.
<p>NUMBER OF EXEMPTIONS</p>	<p>With limited exceptions, you may only receive one exemption under M.G.L. c. 59, § 5 for each fiscal year. If you qualify for more than one, you will receive the one that provides the greatest benefit. You may receive an exemption and if qualified, defer all or a part of the balance of the reduced tax.</p>
<p>ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS</p>	<p>You must satisfy tests relating to age or status, domicile, ownership and assets. You must meet <u>all</u> eligibility requirements as of July 1 of the tax year. <i>(The fiscal year of cities and towns begins July 1 and ends the following June 30.)</i> If you do not meet all requirements as of July 1, you <u>cannot</u> receive all or any portion of the exemption for that tax year.</p>
<p>AGE AND STATUS</p>	<p>You must be 70 or older to be a senior.</p> <p>You must be younger than 18 to be a minor child.</p> <p>You must have been married to the decedent at the time of his or her death, and have never remarried, to be a surviving spouse.</p>
<p>OWNERSHIP AND DOMICILE</p>	<p>You must own and occupy the property as your domicile. Your domicile is where your principal and legal home is located, your family, social, civic and economic life is centered and you plan to return whenever you are away. You may have more than one residence, but only one domicile. If you are a senior, you must also have owned and occupied the property for any 10 years (Clauses 17, 17C or 17C½) or any 5 years (Clause 17D).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your ownership interest must be worth at least \$2,000. You may own this interest solely, as a joint owner or as a tenant in common. 2. If you hold a life estate in the domicile, you are the owner. 3. If your domicile is held in a trust, you are the owner only if: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. You are a trustee or co-trustee of that trust, and b. You have a sufficient beneficial interest in the domicile.

<p>ASSET LIMITS</p> <p>For Arlington allowable estate is \$40,000</p>	<p>Your assets (whole estate) on July 1 cannot exceed a specified limit. Each clause has a different limit.</p> <p>Whole estate means <u>all</u> assets to which you have legal title and access as sole, joint owner or trustee that contribute to your total worth. The value of your cemetery plots, wearing apparel and household furniture and effects located in your domicile is not included in the calculation of your whole estate.</p> <p>In addition, depending on the clause, some of the value of your domicile and the unpaid mortgage balance is not included, but the part of your domicile over a certain number of units may be included.</p> <p>Your allowable whole estate can range from \$20,000 (Clause 17) to \$40,000 (Clauses 17C, 17C½ and 17D). It may increase annually by the percentage increase in the CPI determined by the DOR each year. This increase applies only if the legislative body of your city or town has voted, subject to local charter, to accept this local option.</p>
<p>EXEMPTION CREDIT</p>	<p>If the assessors decide you are eligible and grant an exemption, the amount granted is credited toward and reduces the tax outstanding on your domicile for the fiscal year. You will not receive a refund unless you have already paid the entire year’s tax, as reduced by the exemption, at the time the exemption is granted and applied.</p>
<p>SALE OF DOMICILE</p>	<p>If you are selling your domicile, you should make your attorney aware that you receive a property tax exemption that reduces the tax owed for the fiscal year. The sale is a private financial transaction and as a party, you are responsible for seeing that the exemption is properly credited at the closing, through escrow or other arrangements, when the parties make adjustments for local property taxes or charges. Your city or town is not responsible for seeing that you and the buyer allocate the property taxes so you get the benefit of the exemption.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">APPEALS</p>	
<p>Appellate Tax Board</p>	<p>The Appellate Tax Board (ATB) is an independent, quasi-judicial state board that hears taxpayer appeals from local assessors’ decisions on property tax abatements and exemptions. If county government has not been abolished, appeals may be made to the county commissioners instead, but assessors may and usually do transfer those appeals to the ATB. ATB decisions may be appealed to the Appeals Court and, ultimately, to the Supreme Judicial Court.</p> <p>You can obtain the ATB’s guide to the property tax appeal process from its website (www.mass.gov/atb) or by calling 617-727-3100.</p>

Appeal of Action of Assessors	<p>You have three months from the date of the assessors' decision on your exemption application to appeal to the ATB. This includes decisions to deny any exemption or to grant an exemption that provides a lesser benefit. If the application was deemed denied, your appeal must be filed within three months of the deemed denied date. As a general rule, if the real estate tax on your domicile is over \$5,000, you must also have paid all preliminary and actual tax installments on time for the ATB to hear your appeal.</p> <p>The assessors may grant the exemption or higher exemption in final settlement of your application during the three month period for filing an appeal. In that case, you do not have to have filed an appeal with the ATB. However, if a settlement is not reached and an exemption not granted during that period, you must have filed your appeal by the deadline. If not, the ATB cannot hear the appeal.</p>
--------------------------------------	--

ASSESSMENT AND EXEMPTION CALENDAR	
January 1	Property Tax Assessment Date for Next Fiscal Year
July 1	Fiscal Year Begins Real Estate Exemption Eligibility Date for Fiscal Year
October - December	Actual Tax Bills Mailed for Fiscal Year
November 1 (Semi-annual Payment Communities) February 1 (Quarterly Payment Communities)	1 st Actual Tax Installment Payment Due ¹
April 1, or 3 Calendar Months from Mailing of Actual Tax Bill if later	Personal Exemption Applications to Assessors Due ²

¹ Contact your assessors. The due date depends on the payment system used in your community and the date actual tax bills were mailed for fiscal year.

² Some assessors may accept applications before actual tax bills are mailed. If not, or your application is not approved, you must apply by this deadline to claim the exemption.

3 Calendar Months from Filing of Application (or Date of Written Extension Given by Taxpayer)	Assessors Grant or Deny Exemption Application Deemed Denied if Assessors Have Not Acted
3 Calendar Months from Assessors' Action on Application, or Deemed Denial of Application	Appeal to ATB Due



ARLINGTON
MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF ASSESSORS
Robbins Memorial Town Hall
730 Massachusetts Ave. Arlington, MA 02476
P. 781.316.3050 email: assessors@town.arlington.ma.us
www.arlingtonma.gov

Senior or Surviving Spouse Exemption with optional CPA Clause 17D

Qualifications

- Applicant must own and occupy home as their domicile as of July 1, 2024
- Applicant must have owned and occupied home as primary residence for 5 years.
- Applicant filing as a Senior must be 70 or older on or before July 1, 2024.
- Applicant filing as a Surviving Spouse must have been a widow/widower as of July 1, 2024.
- Properties held in Trust; applicant must be a trustee **and** have a beneficial interest.
- Applicant’s assets¹ must not exceed \$40,000.
- There is no income guideline for this exemption, however, if you’d like to be considered for the Community Preservation Act (CPA) surcharge exemption; your Income² would be limited, see chart on page 2 for details.

Instructions

- A new application is required each year.
- Please complete this application with the same accuracy as you would your income tax return.
- The 2025 application filing deadline is **APRIL 1, 2025**. This deadline cannot be extended or waived by the Board of Assessors for any reason. **It is best to apply as early as possible.**
- New applicants filing as a Senior, must include a copy of a driver’s license, birth certificate or passport for proof of age.
- New applicants filing as a Surviving Spouse, must provide copy of death certificate.
- Provide statements of all assets listed in ASSETS section of application. Statements should state values as of July 1, 2024
- If you would like to be considered for the CPA surcharge exemption; please provide copy of your 2023 Federal Income Tax Return and supporting schedules*.
- If your home is held in a Trust, please provide a copy of the most current Trust document and amendments, including any schedules. **(If you have not previously provided them)**
- Be sure to sign and date your application.
- Submit your application to the Office of the Board of Assessors via mail, drop box (located in parking lot adjacent to Town Hall) or in person. You will be contacted by mail if additional documentation is required.

* If you do not file a Federal Income Tax Return, please contact the Assessors’ Office.

Senior or Surviving Spouse Exemption with optional CPA Clause 17D

Income limits for CPA surcharge exemption

Household Size	Annual Income Limit for CPA Exemption	
	Senior Household Type: Property Owned by Senior (60+)	Non-Senior Household Type: Property Owned by Non-Senior (<60)
1	\$104,230	\$83,384
2	\$119,120	\$95,296
3	\$134,010	\$107,208
4	\$148,900	\$119,120
5	\$160,812	\$128,650
6	\$172,724	\$138,179
7	\$184,636	\$147,709
8	\$196,548	\$157,238

These income limits are adjusted for household size and are based on the 2024 area median income published by HUD.

1. Assets (whole estate) means all assets to which you have legal title and access to as sole, joint owner or trustee that contribute to your total worth. Assets include but are not limited to; checking and savings accounts, CDs, stocks, bonds, IRAs, 401K, other retirement holdings and real estate holdings, other than primary residence.
2. Income (gross receipts) means income from all sources and is broader than taxable income for federal or state income tax purposes. Income includes but is not limited to; salary, wages, social security, rental income, interest, dividends, distributions, pensions, veterans and all other retirement benefits.



ARLINGTON MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF ASSESSORS
Robbins Memorial Town Hall
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
P: 781.316.3050 email assessors@town.arlington.ma.us
www.arlingtonma.gov

Senior (70+), Surviving Spouse or Minor
2025 APPLICATION FOR STATUTORY EXEMPTION
Clause 17D with optional CPA M.G.L. Chapter 59 § 5

This application is not open to public inspection.

FILING PROCEDURE- See instructions

The 2025 filing deadline is April 1, 2025
It is best to file as early as possible, even if you do not have all the required documentation.
You will be contacted by mail regarding any additional documentation needed to process your application.
The deadline cannot be extended or waived by the Board of Assessors for any reason.
Applications received after April 1, 2025, will be deemed denied.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Include applicant, spouse, co-owner(s) of the home as of July 1, 2024

Form with fields for Name, Relationship to Applicant, Date of Birth, Applicant Address (Street, Town, State, Zip), and Applicant Contact Information (Home, Mobile, E-mail).

Form for Contact Person, other than above (optional), including fields for permission to release information, Relationship, and Phone Number of Contact Person.

EXEMPTION STATUS: Check ONE only & complete corresponding section.

Form with three exemption options: SURVIVING SPOUSE, SENIOR 70 OR OLDER, and MINOR WITH DECEASED PARENT, each with required fields and instructions.

Is the ownership of the property in a trust as of July 1, 2024? YES NO

If yes, please include Declaration of Trust and all schedules, unless you previously provided them

Have you applied for or been granted a real estate exemption in any other city or town, in Massachusetts or any other State, for this year? YES NO

Form for exemption amount, including a field for the amount exempted in dollars and a field for the name of the city/town & state.

TOTAL ASSETS					
Enter account balances, as of July 1, 2024, for all assets. All Assets require proof, see documentation listed below.					
Assets (Use account balance/ Actual Value as of 7/1/2024)	Documentation Required	Applicant & Spouse (if applicable)		Other Co-owner	
Checking Account	All Pages of Bank Statements as of July 1, 2024	\$		\$	
Savings Account		\$		\$	
Money Market Account		\$		\$	
Certificate of Deposit (CD)		\$		\$	
IRA(s) & 401K(s) & 403B	All Pages of Account Statements as of July 1, 2024	\$		\$	
401K(s), 403B & 457B		\$		\$	
Brokerage Annuity or Mutual Fund Accounts		\$		\$	
Stocks or Savings Bonds (Attach List)		\$		\$	
Business Accounts		\$		\$	
Real Estate Property (other than the home you live in)	Assessment/ mortgage statement	\$		\$	
Other Miscellaneous Assets (specify). Include any property/ asset outside of the U.S. (include assessments, financial statements		\$		\$	

GROSS COMBINED INCOME					
Complete Income section below to be considered for Community Preservation (CPA) Surcharge exemption. Otherwise skip to signature section.					
Indicate Income amounts for applicant, spouse and/or another co-owner. Income should be total amount received for 2023 . Each income source requires proof. Please enclose copy of 2023 Federal Income Tax Return, including all schedules					
Gross Income (Use Actual Amounts from Calendar 2023)	Documentation Required	Applicant & Spouse (if applicable)		Other Co-Owner(s)	
Wages, Salaries, Tips and other Compensation	Federal Tax Return	\$		\$	
Interest	Federal Tax Return	\$		\$	
Dividends	Federal Tax Return	\$		\$	
IRA distributions & Retirement Distributions (401K, 403B)	Federal Tax Return	\$		\$	
Pensions & Annuities	Federal Tax Return	\$		\$	
Social Security/SSI Benefits	Federal Tax Return	\$		\$	
Veterans Disability Benefits	Benefit letter from 2023	\$		\$	
Net Profits from Rental Income	Schedule E of Federal Tax Return	\$		\$	
Unemployment Compensation	Federal Tax Return	\$		\$	
Capital Gains	Schedule D of Federal Tax Return	\$		\$	
Gambling Winnings	Federal Tax Return	\$		\$	
TOTALS		\$		\$	

Continue to next page →

SIGNATURE: Sign to complete application

This application has been prepared and examined by me. Under the pains and penalties of perjury, I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, this application and all accompanying documents and statements are true, correct, and complete. I also understand that failure to cooperate with any review of my eligibility may cause the application to be denied.

Applicant Signature

Date

Spouse/Co-Owner Signature (if living in the home)

Date

Completed on behalf of Applicant by

Relationship

Signature

Date

TAXPAYER INFORMATION ABOUT PERSONAL EXEMPTIONS

PERSONAL EXEMPTIONS. You may be eligible to reduce all or a portion of the taxes assessed on your domicile if you meet the qualifications for one of the personal exemptions allowed under Massachusetts law. Qualifications vary, but generally relate to age, ownership, residency, disability, income, or assets. You may be eligible for an exemption if you fall into any of these categories:

- Legally blind person
- Veteran with a service-connected disability
- Surviving spouse of service member, national guard member or veteran who died from active-duty injury or illness
- Surviving spouse
- Minor child of a deceased parent
- Senior citizen aged 70 and older (65 and older by local option)

Please note only one of the exemptions above are allowed each year, choose the one that provides the maximum benefit for you. Any of the above may be combined with Senior property tax deferral and/or Community Preservation Act (CPA) Surcharge Exemption.

More detailed information about the qualifications for each exemption may be obtained from your Board of Assessors.

WHO MAY FILE AN APPLICATION. You may file an application if you meet all qualifications for a personal exemption as of July 1. You may also apply if you are the personal representative of the estate, or trustee under the will, of a person who qualified for a personal exemption on July 1.

WHEN AND WHERE APPLICATION MUST BE FILED. Your application must be filed with the Assessors' Office on or before April 1, or 3 months after the actual tax bills were mailed for the fiscal year, whichever is later. An application is filed when (1) received by the Assessors' Office on or before the filing deadline, or (2) mailed by United States mail, first class postage prepaid, to the proper address of the Assessors' Office, on or before the filing deadline, as shown by a postmark made by the United States Postal Service. This deadline cannot be extended or waived by The Board of Assessors or any staff of the Assessors' Office, for any reason. If your application is not timely filed, you lose all rights to an exemption and the Assessors cannot by law grant to one.

PAYMENT OF TAX. Filing an application does not stay the collection of your taxes. In some cases, you must pay all preliminary and actual installments of the tax when due to appeal the Board of Assessors' disposition of your application. Failure to pay the tax when due may also subject you to interest charges and collection action. To avoid any loss of rights or additional charges, you should pay the tax as assessed. If an exemption is granted and you have paid the entire year's tax, you will receive a refund of any overpayment.

ASSESSORS DECISION. Upon applying for an exemption, you may be required to provide the Board of Assessors with further information and supporting documentation to establish your eligibility. The Board of Assessors has 3 months from the date your application is filed to act on it unless you agree in writing before that period expires to extend it for a specific time. If the Board of Assessors do not act on your application within the original or extended period, it is deemed denied. You will be notified in writing whether and exemption has been granted or denied.

APPEAL. You may appeal the disposition of your application to the Appellate Tax Board, or if applicable, the County Commissioners. The appeal must be filed within 3 months of the date the Board of Assessors acted on your application, or the date your application was deemed denied, whichever is applicable. The disposition notice will provide you with further information about the appeal procedure and deadline.