

Update from the Assessor-October 15th, 2019

1. PROPERTY TAX RELIEF PROGRAM

- New York State has mailed out, and is still mailing out, the **Property Tax Relief** checks. This program is **NOT** the STAR program. These checks are based on the following:
 1. The school district HAS to have stayed below the 2% cap
 2. The property owner has to be eligible for the STAR exemption
 3. The amount of the check is based on income

Not everyone will receive the same amount. If you have any questions, you must contact NYS at 518-453-8146 or view the detailed information at www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property-tax-relief.htm The **Town of Amherst Assessor, Town Clerk or Tax Collector are unable to assist.**

2. STAR PROGRAM

- The STAR program has undergone more changes. This past year, NYS has changed how you get STAR if your income is between \$250,000 to \$500,000, has offered the possibility of registering for the check program instead of receiving an exemption and now requires Enhanced STAR recipients to register in the automatic Income Verification Program where the state verifies the income eligibility. This all went into effect with 2018 School tax bills , and continues this year
- All verification and renewals on existing Enhanced STAR is now handled by NY State

EXCEPT

- ***If you are turning 65 in 2019 or 2020, AND you are currently in the STAR program where it is an exemption on your School tax bill, your initial registration will be with the Town Assessors office. Once registered, all follow up and Income Verification will be handled by NY State. Bring to the assessor's office by March 1st your 2018 Income information (IRS 1040, NY State IT 201 , of if not a filer, all 1099's-***
- All new owners (purchased property after 2015) can only be in the STAR Check program, and all registration is with NY State. You can contact NYS at 518-457-2036 to sign up.
- If you have a question, contact the **Amherst Assessor Office** at 631-7038. We will advise you according to your specific situation.

4. LOW INCOME SENIOR EXEMPTION PROGRAM-TOTAL INCOME BELOW \$35,400

- We have mailed out the Senior Aged Renewal forms.
- **ALL** exemption applications and renewals are due by March 1, 2020. You will need to provide **ALL** income documents for **2018**. The IRS changed the 1040 forms for 2018. As a result, we ask that you bring in your Federal **AND** State Income forms. If you do not file a Federal 1040 or

a State IT 201, please bring **ALL 1099s**. In addition, if you have distributions from an IRA or Annuity, please bring in the 2018 year end statement.

- If you **ONLY** received the Enhanced STAR Exemption and are unsure if you may qualify for the Low Income Senior, please come to our office. If you only get the Enhanced STAR, and are in Income Verification Program application – **YOU DO NOT NEED TO RENEW-NY State handles.**
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New York State, Erie County and the Town of Amherst will NOT call any property owner asking for personal information over the phone. There have been some reported cases of people (mostly seniors) receiving phone calls stating they are in jeopardy of losing their exemptions unless they provide their social security number, income, driver's license numbers, etc. **DO NOT GIVE THIS INFORMATION OVER THE PHONE!** If we have any questions, we may call, but will ask you to bring in or send the information to our office. If you are unsure, err on the side of caution and call our office at 631-7038 to confirm.

4. VETERANS

- If you served in Active Duty, please come to the Assessor's office with your DD 214 so we can enroll you in the appropriate Veterans Exemption
- If you have a service related disability, or your rating has changed, please bring a copy of your most recent Disability Rating from the VA so we make sure you have the Veterans disability exemption

5. DISABILITY

- Those with Incomes below \$37,400 and have a disability as verified by Social Security, may be eligible for a Disability exemption. If you feel you qualify, bring a copy of your disability letter from Social Security, plus your 2018 income(1040/IT 201 or if not a filer , all 1099's)
- Those with a disability will be receiving your renewal in next few weeks with instructions
SEE HANDOUT#8

TOWN OF AMHERST ASSESSORS OFFICE

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