

State of Florida

Eligibility Criteria to Qualify for Property Tax Exemption

When to file: Application for all exemptions must be made between January 1 and March 1 of the tax year. However, at the option of the property appraiser, original homestead exemption applications may be accepted after March 1, but will apply to the succeeding year. Initial application should be made in person at the Property Appraiser's office. Subsequent yearly renewal of exemption status may be made by mail. Failure to make application by March 1 of the tax year shall constitute a waiver of the exemption privilege for that year.

\$25,000 Homestead Exemption: Every person who has legal or equitable title to real property in the State of Florida and who resides thereon and in good faith makes it his or her permanent home is eligible. First time applicants are required to furnish their social security number, and should have available evidence of ownership i.e., deed, contract, etc. If title is held by the husband alone, a wife may file for him, with his consent, and vice versa. If filing for the first time, be prepared to answer these and other questions:

1. In whose name or names was the title to the dwelling recorded as of January 1st?
2. What is the street address of the property?
3. Are you a legal resident of the State of Florida? (A Certificate of Domicile or Voter's Registration will be proof if dated prior to January 1st.)
4. Do you have a Florida license plate on your car and a Florida driver's license?
5. Were you living in the dwelling which is being claimed for homestead exemption on January 1st?

Additional \$25,000 Homestead Exemption for persons 65 and older: Every person who is eligible for the homestead exemption described above is eligible for an additional homestead exemption up to \$25,000 under the following circumstances: (1) the county or municipality adopts an ordinance that allows the additional homestead exemption which applies only to the taxes levied by the unit of government granting the exemption; (2) the taxpayer is 65 years of age or older on January 1 of the year for which the exemption is claimed; (3) the annual household income of the taxpayer (defined as the adjusted gross income as defined in s. 62, United States Internal Revenue Code of all members of a household) for the prior year does not exceed \$20,000 (beginning January 1, 2001, this income threshold is adjusted annually by the percentage change in the average cost-of-living index); and, (4) the taxpayer annually submits a sworn statement of household income to the property appraiser not later than March 1.

\$500 Widow's Exemption: Any widow who is a permanent Florida resident may claim this exemption. If the widow remarries, she is no longer eligible. If the husband and wife were divorced before his death, the woman is not considered a widow. You may be asked to produce a death certificate when filing for the first time.

\$500 Widower's Exemption: Any widower who is a permanent Florida resident may claim this exemption. If the widower remarries he is no longer eligible. If the husband and wife were divorced before her death, the man is not considered a widower. You may be asked to produce a death certificate when filing for the first time.

\$500 Disability Exemption: Every Florida resident who is totally and permanently disabled qualifies for this exemption. Furthermore, any service man disabled at least 10% in war or by service-connected misfortune is entitled to a \$500 exemption. If filing for the first time, please present at least one of the following as proof of your disability: 1. If totally and permanently disabled, a certificate from two (2) professionally unrelated licensed Florida physicians or a certificate from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. 2. If claiming at least 10% wartime or service-connected disability, a certificate from the United States Government.

\$500 Exemption for blind persons: Every Florida resident who is blind qualifies for this exemption. If claiming exemption based on blindness, a certificate from the Division of Blind Services of the Department of Education or the United States Department of Veterans Affairs certifying the applicant to be blind is required. "Blind person" is defined as an individual having central vision acuity 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting glasses, or a disqualifying field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter or visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than twenty degrees.

Service-connected total and permanent disability exemption: Any honorably discharged veteran with a service-connected total and permanent disability, surviving spouses of qualifying veterans and spouses of Florida resident veterans who died from service-connected causes while on active duty as a member of the United States Armed forces are entitled to an exemption on real estate used and owned as a homestead less any portion thereof used for commercial purposes.

Persons entitled to this exemption must have been a permanent resident of this state as of January 1st of the year of assessment.

Under certain circumstances the benefit of this exemption can carry over to the veteran's spouse in the event of the veteran's death. Consult your appraiser for details.

If filing for the first time, please bring a certificate from the United States Government or United States Department of Veterans Affairs as your proof of a service-connected disability or death of your spouse while on active duty.

Exemption for totally and permanently disabled persons:

1. Any real estate used and owned as a homestead, less any portion thereof used for commercial purposes by any quadriplegic shall be exempt from taxation.
2. Any real estate used and owned as a homestead, less any portion thereof used for commercial purposes, by a paraplegic, hemiplegic or other totally and permanently disabled person, as defined in Section 196.012(10), F.S., who must use a wheelchair for mobility or who is legally blind, shall be exempt from taxation.

Persons entitled to the exemption under number two (2) above, must be a permanent resident of the State of Florida as of January 1st of the year of assessment. Also, the prior year gross income of all persons residing in or upon the homestead shall not exceed the amount of income, set forth in section 196.101(4), F.S., adjusted annually by the percentage change of the average cost of living index issued by the United States Department of Labor. Gross income shall include United States Department of Veterans Affairs benefits and any social security benefits paid to the person. A statement of gross income must accompany the application.

If filing for the first time, please bring a certificate from two (2) licensed doctors of this state or a certificate (per s. 196.091, F.S.) from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.