

Department of
Taxation and Finance

Questions and answers for homeowners about the new STAR Credit Program

Q 1. Has the STAR Program been abolished?

- A. No. There have been some changes in how certain homeowners will apply for STAR, and in how we distribute the STAR benefit to them; but the STAR program is still very much alive.

See STAR property tax relief program for more information.

Q 2. What are the changes?

- A. New applicants who qualify for STAR will register with New York State instead of applying with their assessor. If they qualify, they will receive a STAR credit in the form of a check, rather than receiving a property tax exemption. The dollar value of the credit will be the same as the property tax exemption.

See STAR property tax relief program for more information.

Q 3. I have been receiving the STAR exemption on my school tax bill. Do I need to register for the STAR credit?

- A. You need to register for the STAR credit if:
- you purchased your home after August 1, 2015;
or
 - you purchased your home between May 1, 2014, and August 1, 2015, and
 - bought your home after the 2015 STAR application deadline, or
 - you did not apply for the STAR exemption on your home by the 2015 application deadline.

Otherwise, no action is necessary—you will continue to receive the STAR exemption on your school tax bill.

See STAR property tax relief program for more information.

Q 4. What was the 2015 STAR application deadline?

- A. It depends on where your home is located. In towns outside of Nassau and Westchester Counties, the 2015 STAR application deadline was March 1, 2015. In cities, and in towns in Nassau and Westchester Counties, there were a variety of different deadlines. Visit 2015 STAR application deadlines to find the deadline for your city or town.

See STAR property tax relief program for more information.

Q 5. I've had a STAR exemption on my home for several years. Do these changes affect me?

- A. No. You will continue to receive the STAR exemption in the same manner and on the same terms as before, as long as:
- you received the STAR exemption on your 2015 school tax bill, and

- you applied for that exemption in *your own* name, based on *your* eligibility, and
- you still own the property, and
- it is still your primary residence.

You do not need to reapply. Your STAR savings will continue to appear as a direct reduction on your school property tax bill.

See STAR property tax relief program for more information.

Q 6. Did I receive the STAR exemption in 2015?

- A. Look at your 2015 school tax bill to see if it shows “STAR tax savings.” You can also check the assessment roll to see if you’re receiving the exemption. See Check your assessment.

See STAR property tax relief program for more information.

Q 7. I have been receiving a “Basic” STAR exemption since 2014. I turned 65 years old a few months ago and believe that I now qualify for the “Enhanced” STAR exemption. May I apply for it?

- A. Yes. If you have been receiving STAR since before the 2015 STAR application deadline, the STAR rules are the same for you as before. That means that to have your Basic STAR upgraded to Enhanced STAR, you must:
- Submit a paper application form (RP-425) to your local assessor, and
 - Do one of the following:
 - Enroll in the Income Verification Program, or
 - Reapply every year with your local assessor using Form RP-425-Rnw.

To learn how to upgrade to Enhanced STAR from an existing Basic STAR exemption, see STAR Exemption Program.

Q 8. I've been getting the Enhanced STAR exemption on my home for several years. What do I need to do now?

- A. The rules are the same for you as before. That means:
- if you are enrolled in the Income Verification Program, you do not need to do anything.
 - if you are not enrolled in the Income Verification Program, you must either:
 - reapply every year with your local assessor using Form RP-425-Rnw, or
 - enroll in the Income Verification Program.

See STAR Exemption Program for more information.

Q 9. I registered for my STAR exemption in 2014. Do I need to register again?

- A. No, not if you still own the same home and it is still your primary residence.

See STAR property tax relief program for more information.

Q 10. I purchased my home in 2015 after the 2015 STAR application deadline, but I received the STAR exemption on my 2015 school tax bill. Do I need to register?

- A. Yes. The reason you received the STAR exemption on your 2015 school tax bill is that the person who sold the home to you had qualified for the STAR exemption. You were entitled to the benefit of the seller’s STAR exemption for the rest of the 2015-2016 school year, but you are not entitled to keep the seller’s STAR exemption beyond that and must register for the STAR credit in order to receive STAR benefits in the future.

To register, see Register for STAR Credit Program.

See STAR property tax relief program for more information.

Q 11. How do I register?

- A. To register, see Register for STAR Credit Program or call (518) 457-2036. Have your school tax bill handy when you call.

See STAR property tax relief program for more information.

Q 12. When should I register?

- A. We recommend that you register as soon as possible after you purchase or move into your home. If you register by July 1st, we will make every effort to mail your check to you by September 30th. If you register after July 1, we will mail your check to you as soon as we can. Registrations will be accepted for three years from the income tax filing deadline for the year that the credit covers. For example, to claim the STAR credit for 2016, you must register by April 15, 2020. However, the sooner you register, the sooner you will receive your STAR check.

To register, see Register for STAR Credit Program.

See STAR property tax relief program for more information.

Q 16. Do I need to register every year?

- A. No. Once you've registered, we'll automatically review your eligibility for the credit every year after that for as long as you continue to own and occupy that home.

To register, see Register for STAR Credit Program.

See STAR property tax relief program for more information.

Q 17. Will I be required to claim the STAR credit as income on my personal income taxes?

- A. We do not expect so. The income tax implications of state tax credits are determined at the federal level. Taxpayers who itemize deductions will likely need to subtract their STAR credit from the real estate taxes they paid if they claim a real property tax deduction. The resulting deduction would be equivalent to the impact of the STAR exemption, which reduces a taxpayer's property tax bill by the same amount as the STAR credit.

In this scenario, taxpayers who take the standard deduction—as most do—would see no impact at all.

Updated: May 19, 2016