Homestead Exemptions

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What is a Homestead?

A homestead can be a separate structure, condominium, or a manufactured home located in owned or leased land, only if the individual living in the home owns it. A homestead can include up to 20 acres if the land is owned by the homeowner and used for a purpose related to the primary residential use of the property.

What is a Homestead Exemption?

Homestead exemptions remove part of your home's value from taxation, so they lower your taxes. These exemptions are issued by the county appraisal district that has jurisdiction over the property.

There are several types of exemptions you may receive:

- **School Taxes:** Residence homestead owners are allowed a $100,000 homestead exemption from their home's value for school taxes. For example, if your home is appraised at $400,000 and you qualify for a $100,000 exemption (this is the amount mandated for school districts), you will pay school taxes on the home as if it was only worth $300,000.
- **County Taxes**: If a county collects a special tax for farm-to-market roads or flood control, a residence homestead is allowed to receive a $3,000 exemption for this tax. If the county grants an optional exemption for homeowners aged 65 or older or disables, the owners will receive only the local-option exemption.
- **Age 65 or Older and Disabled Exemptions:** Individuals aged 65 or older or disabled residence homestead owners qualify for a $10,000 homestead exemption for school taxes, in addition to the $100,000 exemption for all homeowners. If the owner qualifies for both the $10,000 exemption for age 65 or older homeowners and the $10,000 exemption for disabled homeowners, the owner must choose one or the other for school taxes. The owner cannot receive both exemptions.
- **Optional Percentage Exemptions:** Any taxing unit, including a city, county, school, or special district, may offer an exemption of up to 20 percent of a home's value. No matter what the percentage is, the amount of an optional exemption cannot be less than $5,000. Each taxing unit decides if it will offer the exemption and at what percentage. This percentage exemption is added to any other home exemption for which an owner qualifies. The taxing unit must decide before July 1 of the tax year to offer this exemption.
- **Optional Age 65 Or Older Or Disabled Exemptions:** Any taxing unit may offer an additional exemption amount of at least $3,000 for taxpayers aged 65 or older and/or disabled exemption.

Who Qualifies for the Homestead Exemption?

Only a homeowner's principal residence qualifies. A home must meet the definition of a residence homestead with the following criteria:

- The home's owner must be an individual (for example: not a corporation or other business entity)
- You must occupy and use the home as your principal residence on January 1 of the tax year
- You cannot claim any other property as homestead
- A homestead can be a house, condominium, or a manufactured home. It can include up to 20 acres if the land is also owned by the homeowner and used as a yard or for another purpose related to the residential use of the home.

When to File?

Recent laws now permit homeowners to apply for their exemption at any point throughout the year. However, the exemption will go into effect the following year if the application is sent in after the deadline of April 30th.

Most County Appraisal Districts will require an updated Driver's License with the property address you are applying for the exemption listed as your mailing address. This exemption will automatically renew every year. Once you receive the exemption, you do not need to reapply unless the chief appraiser sends you a new application. In that case, you must file the new application and send in supporting documentation. If you should move or your qualification ends, you must inform the appraisal district in writing before the next May 1st.

How to Apply?

In order to apply for a homestead exemption, you must submit your application and all supporting documentation. Applications can be filled out online or downloaded and sent in via mail directly to the appraisal district where the property is located.

Hays County | www.hayscad.com

Mailing Address: 21001 IH 35 North, Kyle, TX 78640

Bell County | www.bellcad.org

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 390, Belton, TX 76513

Travis County | www.traviscad.org

Mailing Address: P.O. BOX 149012, Austin, TX 78714

Williamson County | www.wcad.org

Mailing Address: 625 FM 460, Georgetown, TX 78626

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