

Low Income Homeowner, Residential Property Tax

For low income families, paying property taxes can prove to be strenuous. That's why the Halifax Regional Municipality offers programs that may help homeowners pay their property tax through a payment plan, a property tax rebate, or deferral of property taxes (payment is put off to a later date). These programs are available to all homeowners with a combined household income of \$32,000 or less a year who live within the boundary of Halifax Regional Municipality. A complete list of qualifications and application check list can be found in the application guide.

<http://www.halifax.ca/taxes/exemption/documents/Newsletter2014-15.pdf>

With each household being different, it is important that you know what options are available, and choose the best option to fit your needs.

A payment plan: rather than two large payments you can pay in smaller monthly amounts.

A rebate: If your household income is less than \$32,000. The amount of rebate varies with income and residential tax. A rebate is the amount of your property tax bill paid by HRM. The value of the rebate is calculated using your total gross household income (Line 150 on the Notice of Assessment issued by Canada Revenue Agency), the Residential portion of your home's tax assessment, and the amount of Residential property tax billed.

A rebate and a deferral: After the rebate has been applied to your tax account you can postpone payment of all or a portion of the balance. Interest is charged on the deferred tax amount. The rate of interest is set by Regional Council. For 2014-15 the interest rate is Prime -2% for customers in the program and Prime +2% for customers whose income now exceeds the limits and must start a repayment plan.

A deferral of local improvement charges: You can postpone payment of all or a portion of your local improvement charge.

You can also combine different options to meet your needs such as:

A rebate + a payment plan to pay the balance in monthly amounts.

A rebate + a deferral of the full balance.

A rebate + deferral of only part of the balance.

A rebate + a deferral of the balance of tax due + a deferral of local improvement charges.

For more details, the 2014-15 Residential Property Tax Exemption Application Form and a Guide are available each year from HRM Customer Service Centers, one being located at Acadia Centre, 636 Sackville Drive, the HRM Call Centre at 311, the HRM Financial Services Department and on the www.halifax.ca website. The deadline for applications is March 31st 2015.

Provincial Programs

Further to Municipal programs, the province offers various grants, rebates and a number of other ways to assist residents, such as housing repair programs and property tax rebates for seniors. A complete list of these programs is on page 10 of HRM's Property Tax Exemption Guide. Or you can call 211. This is a provincial service where users can easily and quickly connect to the community and social services they need.